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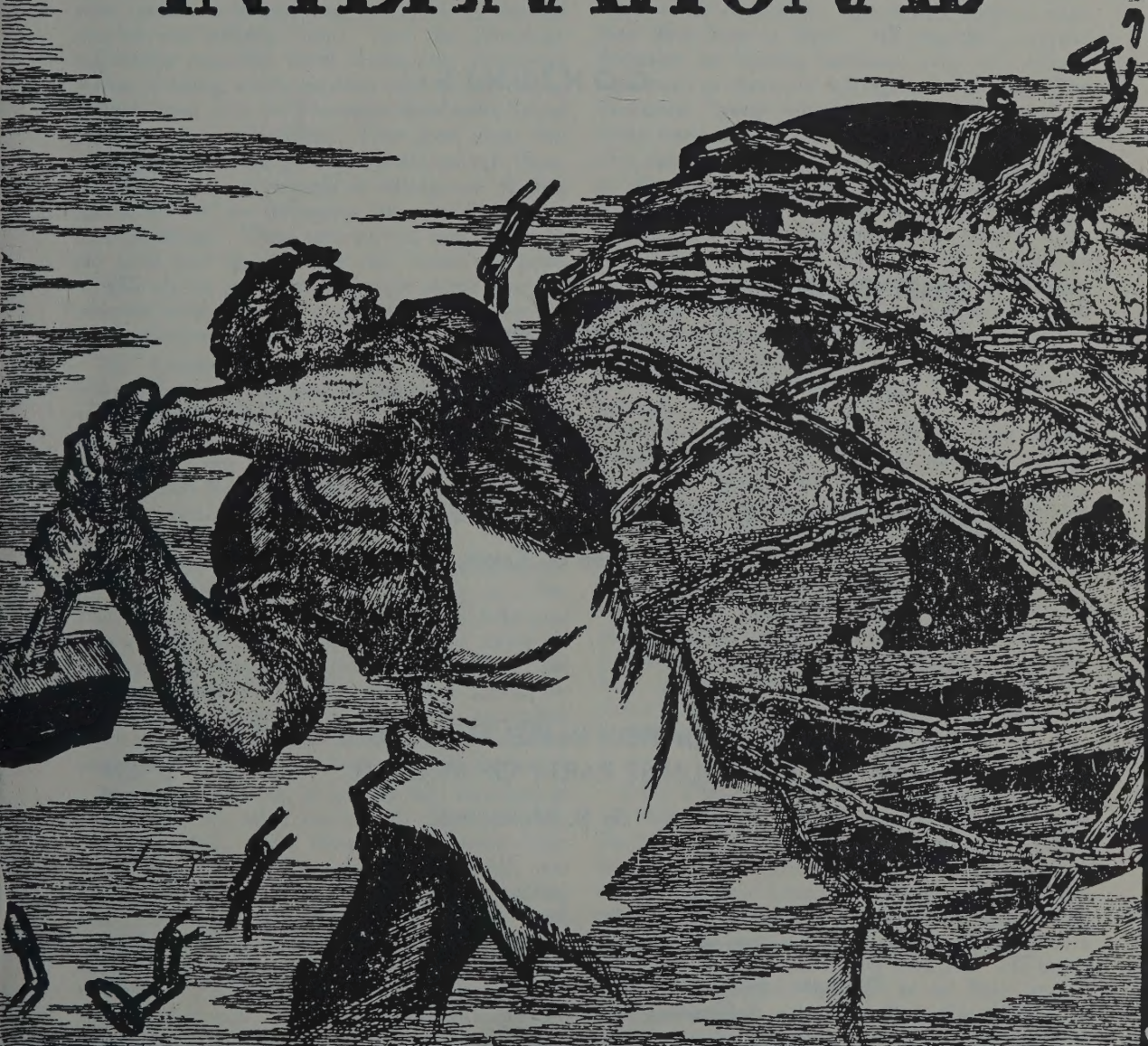

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ERNST THAELMANN

By R. GROETZ

FROM time immemorial the city of Hamburg, where Ernst Thaelmann was born, has been a city of the most acute class contradictions. The grandfathers of the present shipowners took advantage of the convenient situation of the port of Hamburg to secure themselves stupendous super-profits at the expense of the hinterland, at the expense of localities far removed from the sea. The Hamburg patricians competed with the Dutch in the African slave trade, and in supplying alcohol to the colonial peoples and robbing them. And the Draconian regulations regarding naval service, the Draconian system of fining, which remained valid in the Weimar Republic even after the November Revolution, helped them to exploit the sailors. Their most usual deal was to send good-for-nothing, heavily insured "floating coffins" to sea precisely in anticipation of their loss at sea and the subsequent receipt of high insurance premiums. These exploiters of hired slaves at the same time speculated in real estate; the proletarians of the port were stifled in slums near the wharves which attained a sad world fame for the terrific cholera epidemics which broke out there.

The Hamburg exploiters tried on one hand to bribe and subject the army of trading employees to their arbitrary will by means of delusion: the prospect that they might become merchants, or reach the highest office posts. On the other hand it was with ruthless force that these exploiters used the entire apparatus of the Free City of Hamburg against the struggling workers.

After the bitter struggles lost by the workers due to the reformist trade union leadership in 1896, 1906, and 1911, the shipowners and the metallurgical magnates established a monopoly in the hiring of labor power, which the exploiters throughout the whole of Germany took as a model. This system was established for the purpose of purging the enterprises of class fighters and of attracting to Hamburg a reserve army of labor which beats down wage rates.

Hamburg was proud of its long time traditions as "bulwark of the labor movement". Such names as Weitling, Heib, York, Hasenklewer, Ignatz Auer, Jakob Auderf, and others, and later on Bebel, were connected with the history of the Hamburg working class movement. But the house decorated with the old and faded laurels has long since become a house contaminated with the ulcer of reformism. Fossilized old men dominated in the party, and strange as it may sound, they were still regarded as Left fighters in many parts of Germany. They were so regarded despite the fact that, for instance, after serious clashes with the police, they reduced to naught and disrupted the struggle against the brazen offensive upon suffrage rights (1906) by their declarations that in principle they respected all the laws of the bourgeois state.

The squabbles and bickerings between the social-democratic bureaucracy and the bureaucrats of trade union and co-operative movements were settled in secret as far as possible. Efforts were made to wash their dirty linen at home. All attempts to spread discussion on burning questions were very rapidly suppressed as obnoxious infringements of order. The far-famed "party education" section disposed of cheap wares at classes and in talks. The publication of a series of pamphlets, including *The Mass Strike* by Rosa Luxemburg, and the *Path to Power* by Kautsky, which the Lefts in Germany credited so undeservedly to the philistines in the Central Committee, bore no fruitful influence over the mass of members, insofar as the scornful name of "literary bickerings" was permanently and regularly attached to the controversies and disagreements in the country which prevailed between the Lefts, the Centrist bog, and the Revisionists in Hamburg. The standard was very low.

When war policy exposed the German Social-Democratic Party as the social insurance of the bourgeoisie against the proletarian revolution, the organ of the Hamburg social-democrats became the central organ of the "re-educaters". Social-patriotism and social-imperialism raged in its columns.

This cursory review of the history of the labor movement in Hamburg explains why the factors, which during and after the war handicapped the formation of the Communist Party, had a particularly strong influence precisely in Hamburg, and shows how great are the merits of Ernst Thaelmann in solving this problem.

* * * * *

Ernst Thaelmann was born in Hamburg on April 17, 1886. Even during the period of the anti-socialist law his father belonged to social-democracy. Already, at the age of 16, Ernst Thaelmann became a member of the Social-Democratic Party, and at the age of 17 joined the German Transport Workers' Union. Ernst began work first in the port, then he was a sailor, and later he worked on transport. He began to fulfill responsible functions in the Party and in the trade union movement early in life. When he had to fulfill military service he already had the

reputation of being a "politically unreliable fellow", who did not recognize his fatherland. As a revolutionary social-democrat, he had to suffer all the mockery of Prussian militarism.

When he finished his military service, Ernst Thaelmann became a member of the Transport Workers' Committee, and later a representative of the Hamburg Trade Union Council. At the same time he was successively the first organizer in the laundry driver's section, member of the drivers' branch committee, leader of the Dockers' Branch and a reporter of the Hamburg Bureau of the trade union.

In 1912, the Hamburg transport workers delegated Ernst Thaelmann to the Eighth Congress in Breslau, where he made a speech against the reduction of the trade unions to the role of relief agencies and against the growing pretensions of the upper trade union bureaucracy.

> "It has been mentioned further, that district fees are to be raised from five to ten pfennigs. I consider this excessive. The district leaders should try to cut down their expenses. . . . As regards doles, I will point out that our organization is becoming more a relief organization than an organ of struggle. This should not be so."

Resolution No. 27 called for a further curtailment of the rights of trade union members and proposed that in definite cases the right of settling questions should be given to the "local committee", disregarding the local membership meeting's power to make decisions. Thaelmann declared:

> "I move that motion 27 be turned down as the local committee cannot enjoy such confidence and the members of the organization sometimes have a quite different opinion than the committee."

It was not the political acumen of the social-democratic and trade union leaders that created the youth organization in Germany, but exclusively the initiative of the exploited youth who received support from Karl Liebknecht and other representatives of the Left Wing. And it was only later that the social-democratic leaders began to interest themselves in the youth in their own way, their only care being that they should not perpetrate any political "stupidities". It was only under the pressure of the mass of the membership that the trade union leaders proceeded to create youth sections in the trade unions. Ernst Thaelmann and the revolutionary youth of his circle rallied to the general meetings of the Transport Workers' Union first 300, and later about 1,800 young workers. Finally the reformist bureaucracy resorted to repressions against this revolutionary youth section. At the Breslau Congress in 1912 Ernst Thaelmann stated:

> "We have youth sections only in Berlin and Hamburg. And we still need to plough this field. The young people in our trade are left to their own devices more than in the qualified trades. This is the reason why much more should be done for the youth. . . . I consider it unjust that, despite higher membership fees, the youth should be given less rights than the adults, and I move that this point be rejected."

At the Ninth Congress of the Transport Workers' Union in 1914 held in Cologne, Ernst Thaelmann again spoke in favor of the election of trade union officials by the members of the union, in favor of the elective principle in the trade unions, against transferring discussions and decisions to the narrow bureaucratically limited circle of functionaries, and against the neglect of the masses of the members and for short-time wage agreements.

The reformist trade union bureaucracy, who for the sake of appearance, waged a sham struggle against the employers, attempted to bribe the young revolutionary, and so did the employers. The owner of a large laundry establishment, for example, offered Ernst Thaelmann a permanent position if only he ceased his "undermining work" in the capacity of the chairman of the workers' committee. By his rejection of this dirty transaction, Ernst Thaelmann gained the honor of being included in the employers' black list, and was "rewarded" with a long period of unemployment. The bureaucrats of the Transport Workers' Union made plans to somehow "gag the mouth" of this inconvenient leader of the revolutionary opposition by providing him with a soft job in the union. But they soon learned how hopeless it was to attempt such things.

After the betrayal by social-democracy at the outset of the war, Ernst Thaelmann passed into the ranks of the opposition, which forced the leaders of Hamburg social-democracy to bring their treacherous policy for discussion at a number of stormy delegate meetings. Already in 1914 Ernst Thaelmann was called to the army. Not a day of furlough did he get for two and a half years; and the only interruption was a period of imprisonment following a war tribunal sentence. During this whole period Ernst Thaelmann maintained his connections with the revolutionary circles in Hamburg and received opposition newspapers and illegal propaganda material. In 1917, while spending his short furlough in Hamburg, he became a member of the newly founded Independent Social-Democratic Party. He used his furlough to discuss methods of illegal activity in the army.

When the November Revolution broke out, a strong Independent Social-Democratic Party was already in existence in Hamburg alongside of the old

social-democracy, as well as an illegal, numerically much weaker, "Left-radical" grouping, which was exceptionally imbued with syndicalist elements. Anybody who wanted to join the "Left-radical" "organization of unity", was asked to resign from his trade union. Participation in parliamentary elections was rejected "in principle". This sectarian line excited sharp discussions in the "Left-radical" organization, which joined the Communist Party of Germany (at that time the Spartakus Bund), until its split in March, 1920. Luxemburg, the leader of the "Left-radicals", who gained revolutionary prestige during war time, was acting chairman of the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies (formed on a party basis [!] of representatives of three parties and of the trade unions) and carried on a menshevist policy in the Soviet. Under such confused circumstances it was no wonder that the attractive power of the Communist Party of Germany in Hamburg was not particularly great among the best sections of the working class.

Upon his return from the war, Ernst Thaelmann intentionally remained in the ranks of the Independent Social-Democratic Party, with the idea of going over to the Communist Party of Germany, not by himself alone, but with as many comrades as possible. He did not limit himself to the systematic and stubborn struggle against the Right leaders of the Independent Social-Democratic Party. Together with other sincere, revolutionary functionaries he was constantly involved in struggle, often above the heads of the Central Committee elements who were afraid of struggle in accordance with the course of events. We quote a few examples:

In the middle of January, 1919, in Bremen, Noske's agents were kicked out of the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, and workers' armed platoons were set up. In vain did Noske threaten and in vain did he send a division to the Lower Weser at the end of January. The revolutionary workers sensed that after the January massacre in Berlin it would constitute the beginning of a counter-revolutionary drive throughout the country. Telegrams of protest showered in torrents on Ebert, Scheidemann, Noske. The Soviet of Soldiers' Deputies of the Twelfth Army Corps, which had its seat in Hamburg-Altona, threatened to come to and render armed assistance to Bremen. The miners of the Ruhr threatened a strike.

With the determined armed support of Hamburg, the "Herstenberg division" sent by Noske to Bremen could easily have been crushed. This example would have kindled the fire of revolutionary struggle throughout the country. And it was precisely for this reason, in order to avert this decisive step, that the Hamburg social-democratic leaders transformed the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies into an endless talking shop. The leaders of the Independents (Right) and Laufenberg caught the bait. While debates and controversies were renewed on February 3, debates which lasted until late at night, about 1,000 Independent and Communist workers, under the leadership of Ernst Thaelmann proceeded to the barracks, and armed themselves so as to go to the aid of their brothers in Bremen. The news of such an "independent" act exploded like a bomb-shell at the session of the Soviet. The session was adjourned. In the meantime the armed workers were already marching to the railway station. But Noske's agents sabotaged their departure by all possible means. Thus only part of the workers succeeded in reaching Bremen, and their action failed in its purpose. Despite the heroic resistance of the workers, Noske's troops seized Bremen on February 4.

Bremen was followed by Central Germany, then by Berlin once more, then by the Ruhr, Wuerttemberg and Bavaria. Noske's White bandits gradually restored bourgeois "peace and law and order", after brutally murdering 15,000 German workers. In Hamburg in June, 1919, the guard detachments, the last bearers of arms of the November Revolution, were replaced by absolutely reliable police officers. The voluntary detachments composed of the sons of the bourgeoisie was brought to full readiness. The exposures of the vile doing in the Hamburg Food Supply apparatus gave rise to big workers' demonstrations. It was then discovered that the guard detachments, who were threatened with dissolution, were unfit for struggle against the workers. The voluntary detachment attacked the demonstrators, but it was smashed by the workers who had promptly procured arms. Then the social-democratic government of the Free City of Hamburg called in the help of the imperial executive power, *i.e.*, of Noske.

The revolutionary circles of the workers firmly rejected the idea of immediately accepting the challenge to fight Noske's White gangs, which had in the meantime grown stupendously. Then, news was received that a regiment of North German troops was marching on Hamburg. When the regiment entered the city, the alarmed workers with their wives and children filled the streets, and closely followed the troops, talking with them in the local dialect and explaining the real state of affairs in Hamburg to the soldiers who had been deceived by all kinds of fables about the horrors being perpetrated there. Ernst Thaelmann was busy in the midst of the throng. He himself entered into conversation with the soldiers, and at the same time gave instructions to the active workers who were continuously going and coming. The soldiers had not expected such a reception. They began to waver. Their train got stuck near the Main Station, and

soon the arms voluntarily surrendered by the soldiers found their way to the hands of the workers, men and women. The officers were helpless, and they left the city with the almost completely disarmed soldiers. Then Noske drew a great number of troops to Hamburg, and in a week's time these troops seized the city at sunrise.

Under the leadership of Ernst Thaelmann, the Hamburg Independent workers, almost without exception, joined the Communist Party of Germany in 1920. Only a handful of petty-bourgeois elements remained outside, who very soon dissolved in the Social-Democratic Party. Ernst Thaelmann was a member of the Regional Committee of the Communist Party of Germany and chairman of its Hamburg organization.

Severing's offensive against the workers of Central Germany received a rebuff from the revolutionary workers of Hamburg. The police were on the point of cutting off the road taken by the workers who were marching from the wharves. The police opened up machine-gun fire upon the masses. But in spite of the obstacles which barred the streets, tens of thousands demonstrated in the very heart of the city. An officer shouted the order to disperse, from the turret of an armored car which cut straight into the masses. But the workers did not retreat. And it was Ernst Thaelmann who was marching in the front ranks, coolly deliberating on how to repulse this police provocation.

Ernst Thaelmann indisputably came to the forefront in all the ecomonic and political fights of the Hamburg proletariat. He represents the type of proletarian leader who has grown up in the process of revolutionary struggles, and who is always closely bound up with the thoughts and feelings of his class. The great confidence which the class-conscious workers had in him extended far beyond the confines of the Hamburg organization of the Communist Party of Germany, and helped him in his struggle to transform the Communist Party of Germany into a true Bolshevik mass Party.

> "The tragedy of the German revolution in 1918, of the January battles in 1919, of the battles in 1920 after the Kapp putsch, of the March battles in 1921 and up to the last upsurge of the acute revolutionary situation, of this first period in October, 1923, consisted, on one hand, in the lack of co-ordination between the objectively matured revolutionary situation, and on the other hand in the subjective weakness of the German proletariat, due to the absence of the purposeful Bolshevik Party." (Thaelmann, *Militant Speeches and Articles.*)

The fact that he understood this already determined Ernst Thaelmann's action in the years 1921-1923 against Brandler and the then opportunist policy of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Germany, and against the "Left" deviations of Urbans, who was then the chairman of the Maritime organization of the Communist Party of Germany.

From the period of the Unity Congress of 1920, Ernst Thaelmann was the representative of the Hamburg organization in the Supreme Control Commission of the Communist Party of Germany, whose duty it was to check the work of the Central Committee in the intervals between the congresses. In June, 1921, Thaelmann came as delegate to the Third Congress of the Comintern, and, as later at the Jena Congress of the German Communist Party, he took an active part in the discussions and in the preparation of the resolutions, which separated the policy of the Party both from the renegade Levi group and from the "theoreticians of the offensive" of that time, Thalheimer, and others.

The increasing inflation, the growth of the cost of living, and of the burden of taxation in 1922 not only revolutionized the working class with greater intensity, but also assisted the first onslaught of the fascist wave. On the night of June 19, 1922, swastika terrorists attached two hand grenades to the window of Ernst Thaelmann's living quarters which were situated on the ground floor. Part of the apartment was destroyed by the explosion of the grenades, but the main blow failed to affect the inside of the apartment. The plot to destroy the leader of the Hamburg proletariat failed. The social-democratic press was brazen enough to assert that the attempt was staged. However, when the fascist culprits were discovered after further attempts upon the Communist Party headquaters and the Communist book store, and were formally sentenced to imprisonment, the social-democratic government of Hamburg reduced the sentences they received and soon released them altogether.

The events of 1923 were approaching as early as the Tenth Congress of the Transport Workers' Union, held in Stuttgart in 1919, Ernst Thaelmann declared that "it was impossible to eliminate political question from the trade unions". The Hamburg transport workers elected him in 1924 to represent them at the Eleventh Congress of the union, which convened in Berlin. Among other things, Ernst Thaelmann stated the following at this Congress:

> "It is true, that in the present circumstances the economic struggles and strikes for wages are the surest means to prevent the further worsening of the conditions of the working class, but the character of the trade union struggle must be extended and changed. The struggle against the impoverishment of the masses cannot be confined to economic struggles alone. We have every reason to state outright at the trade union congress that it

is no use expecting any measures in the interests of the proletariat from the capitalist governments. We have seen these last few days that Stinnes, as the representative of capitalism and the big bourgeoisie, has approached the government with a firmly outlined program, while the A.D.G.B. [reformist German General Federation of Trade Unions] replies to this with modest proposals and weak suggestions, which do not give the proletariat the required practical improvement of their conditions. In the last paragraph, the memorandum demands from the German government, *i.e.*, from the capitalist government, that a law or a decree be issued forbidding all kinds of speculative transactions and establishing rigid control of prices fixed by concerns and syndicates. But he who believes that a capitalist government is in a position to do so has learned nothing since 1918."

In this speech Comrade Thaelmann declared himself for a revolutionary policy in the trade union movement, a policy which does not stop before the artificial obstacles of paragraphs and clauses piled up by the reformist bureaucracy—as was called for by the legalist theses of Brandler and his adherents—but, on the contrary, recognized the full importance of struggle for the everyday interests and needs of the proletariat. Ernst Thaelmann fought against the absurd contention of the Brandler leadership in 1923 that it was necessary to put a brake on the partial struggles of the proletariat—who were up in arms against the ruinous consequences of the catastrophic inflation—and that it was necessary to put such a brake on them so as to concentrate their revolutionary energy. Thaelmann fought against this as an attempt to evade struggle altogether. October of 1923 soon proved how correct was his estimate of the Party leadership of that time. This is what Ernst Thaelmann wrote about October 1923:

"It was with incredible rapidity that in October, 1923, we approached the moment when the movement burst through its narrow framework with irrepressible, elemental force and generated the supreme form of struggle, the uprising. An outright revolutionray situation was present. All the conditions requisite for the victory of the revolutionary class were at hand, with the exception of one, namely the existence of a clear, iron, monolithic Communist Party, indissolubly bound to the widest masses, and ready and capable of embracing the spontaneous struggle of the working masses, of organizing and leading it.

"At the decisive hour, the leadership of our Party proved to be bankrupt.

"Our Party as a whole was too unripe as yet to prevent the mistakes of the leadership. Thus, in autumn of 1923 the revolution suffered defeat due to the absence of one of the most essential prerequisites, namely, because there was no Bolshevik Party."

And Thaelmann was able to add with full justice:

"But does this exhaust the whole history of October, 1923? No, not by any means! Later again errors were committed in resolutions and articles, and even in the speeches made before the bourgeois tribunal, in that reference was made to Saxony alone, when it was a question of October, 1923. But not only Saxony existed. There was Hamburg as well.

"Hamburg corroborated the Leninist thesis on a very large scale, to the effect that the movement bursts through its narrow framework with irrepressible elemental force and generates the supreme form of struggle, the uprising! As stated in the Theses of the January Executive Committee in 1924, the Hamburg uprising was the opposite pole to Saxony."

Those, who see nothing but bankruptcy, treachery, and opportunism in the history of the whole of our Party up to Frankfurt, forget the great lessons of the Hamburg struggle. They forget that the rank and file of our Party by no means remained in a state of passive impotence, but were ready to stake their lives in the struggle for power. The Hamburg workers more than all others can declare that not only the Hamburg workers, but the Berlin, Saxonian, and all other Communist workers in Germany expressed their readiness for the struggle.

And we can add, that the heroic October battles of the Hamburg proletariat would not have been possible without the many years of struggle by Ernst Thaelmann for the introduction of Bolshevik clarity, for internal and external consolidation of the forces of the Hamburg organization of the Communist Party of Germany.

The Hamburg example made it possible to rapidly overcome the spirit of depression and dejection which prevailed in connection with the October defeat. The illegal Communist Party persistently called for a change of the opportunist Party leadership. And from this period Ernst Thaelmann takes his place at the head of the Communist Party and strives for the realization of the point which he formulates as the "Lessons of the Hamburg Uprising", in one of his programmatic articles. We quote herein below the following lines from his article:

"In order to gain victory in the inevitably impending repetition of the Hamburg battles, but on a much larger scale, we must imbed ourselves in the masses, and bind ourselves to them by thousands of threads, creating a genuinely proletarian united front with the millions of workers. A great revolutionary wing must grow up in the

trade unions, and in all the non-Party organizations of the working class, which jointly with the Communists will become the bearer of the oncoming battles.

"The seizure of power by the proletariat is not the act of a single moment. It consists not only of a military struggle against the army of the bourgeoisie, but must be prepared by years of work carried on by the Communist Party and the whole proletariat. The future conquerors of the bourgeoisie must be educated, trained and organized in countless partial struggles. Such is our chief task at the present period.

"The Hamburg fighters enjoyed the full sympathy of the workers in the enterprises, but they had no organizational links with these workers. The entire inadequacy, the fatal backwardness of our old social-democratic organization according to the territorial principle, stood revealed. The election machine is of no use for barricades. The biggest gap in the Hamburg fighting front was the absence of Communist nuclei in the factories and mills."

The Bolshevization of the Communist Party of Germany soon called for struggle against the Ruth Fischer and Maslow groupings, these petty bourgeois, who hid behind "Left" phrases, and who, by their sectarian line, prevented the Party from waging a struggle for the majority of the working class. Ernst Thaelmann's great merit lies in the fact that, in the full consciousness of his purpose, he struggled firmly and stubbornly against this sectarian group, thus ensuring its rapid liquidation. In his fight on two fronts, against the "Left" and the Right deviations, Ernst Thaelmann succeeded in consolidating the Bolshevization of the Communist Party of Germany to an ever greater degree. In 1928 he successfully repulsed the attempt of the Brandlerites, who had the support of the conciliatory elements, to gain influence in the Party leadership with a view to reducing the role of the Communist Party in the class struggle of the German proletariat and to forcing the Communist Party to follow the lead of social-democracy and the trade union bureaucrats.

Thaelmann, the pilot of the Communist Party of Germany took the helm ever more firmly into his hands, and elevated the Communist Party of Germany to the level of a mass Party for which six million German workingmen and women voted at the elections. It was only under his leadership that the Communist Party of Germany grew into a Bolshevik mass Party and found its way to the Leninist policy of the united front, to the policy of the revolutionary trade union movement, of the independent leadership of the struggles of the working class. It is only under his leadership that the Communist Party of Germany has fought against the treacherous policy of social-democracy, and with ever growing success has fought for the winning over of the social-democratic workers, our class comrades, and has learned more and more to master the problems of correctly estimating social-fascism and fascism, and of the alliance of the workers and peasants.

Upon Ernst Thaelmann's proposal, the Central Committee issued a fiery programmatic declaration in August 1930 on the "social and national liberation of the German people", a platform which proved to be a terrible weapon in the struggle against the nationalist demagogy of Hitlerite fascism, as well as against the entire nationalist policy of the bourgeoisie and of social-democracy. And even now this platform serves again and again in the underground publications of the Communist Party of Germany as a guide showing the masses the road to emancipation through the establishment of Soviet Power.

The very fact that whenever Thaelmann undertook a tour, tens of thousands always gathered to hear Ernst Thaelmann, the leader of the Communist Party and the leader of the Red Front Fighters (the organization prohibited by Severing—but nevertheless still continuing to exist), is undoubted proof of their confidence in the Communist Party of Germany, of their sympathy for Soviet Power, of their desire to follow the great revolutionary example of the workers and peasants of the U.S.S.R. At the same time, the workers knew, or understood by instinct, that the leader of the German Communist Party is one of their own in the best sense of this word, flesh of the flesh of the working class, bound closely and directly to the working masses. Thaelmann perceived and caught on to every least little movement among the masses. This political sense, his understanding and knowledge of the life of the workers, clearly combined with theoretical clarity, as well as his intrepidity and bravery in the political struggle, made Ernst Thaelmann the leader of the German proletariat.

In 1928 and 1929 the German Communist Party took a most determined course for the independent waging of economic struggle in ruthless struggle against social-fascism.

The Comintern and the Profintern in those years anticipated the forthcoming world economic crisis. Bourgeois "scientists" and the reformists, blinded by the prolonged "stabilization" of market conditions, started to talk about "crisisless economy". At the Kiel Congress of the Social-Democratic Party of Germany, Hilferding spoke of the period of peaceful transition from capitalism to socialism, of the growing stability of economic conditions, declaring that the economic crisis was of less danger; and that due to the greater planning of capitalist economy the workers were being less and less affected by it. At the Hamburg Congress of trade unions, Naftali sang the praises of "economic democracy" as a form of

the peaceful co-existence of the employers and the workers.

In contrast to these prophecies the Communist International predicted the oncoming crisis, and orientated the tactics of the Communist Party to meet this period of crisis.

The Brandlerites and the conciliators inside the C.P., on the other hand, were up in arms against the theses of the Sixth Congress of the Comintern regarding the shattering and the approaching end of temporary stabilization. They also turned down the tactical conclusions, particularly those drawn in the sphere of trade union work.

Despite the strongest opposition of Brandler and Thalheimer, and ignoring the personal attacks made by the Brandlerites and conciliators, Ernst Thaelmann fought both these groupings without mercy. The Communist Party of Germany came out with Red revolutionary lists at the elections of the factory committees: the revolutionary trade union opposition came into being.

When success was attained in firmly consolidating the revolutionary trade union opposition under the leadership of the Communist Party, the trade union bureaucrats of the Central Transport Workers Union seized this opportunity on March 18, 1931, to expel Ernst Thaelmann from the union to which he had belonged for 28 years. But if it was formerly considered the greatest disgrace among the workers to be expelled from a workers' organization, the reformist defenders of the capitalist order have long since turned this disgrace into a supreme honor by expelling revolutionary workers in masses. In his reply to the letter informing him of his expulsion, Ernst Thaelmann wrote, among other things, that the

> "Bureaucracy, now dominating and violating the gigantic organizations of the German proletariat, has been forming in the trade unions for decades. This bureaucracy feels itself independent of the will of the wide masses of members. These bureaucrats have secured their well-paid jobs for life; they have blood-bonds with capitalism, with the capitalist State.
>
> "But anybody who does not want to fight against this system, must also oppose the economic strike and must become a scab on principle. Such is the iron logic of capitalist development. Such is the course of German reformism.
>
> "The revolutionary trade union opposition springs up as a force which will restore the stronghold against exploitation which has been destroyed by the trade union bureaucracy. A new force is springing up from factories, from mines, from construction jobs, and landed estates, which makes it its object to create powerful organizations against the employers and fascism. The revolutionary trade union opposition is once more regenerating the best traditions of the trade union class struggle in Germany which is over sixty years of age. The revolutionary trade union opposition wishes to and must—and this is its duty before the German working class—restore the class front, which you have destroyed."

Those who expelled Ernst Thaelmann have long since been thrown overboard, after having cleared the road for fascism. This has only been the case if they did not promptly and openly rush to the fascist "ground of real facts" and did not become Hitler's chained dogs, in the same way as when they wagged their tails before all former capitalist governments of Germany, wearing dog-collars with the legend of the "lesser evil". As an organized parliamentary party they were thrown overboard together with all the forms of bourgeois-democratic parliamentarism, which once yielded plenty of advantages to the bourgeoisie, and have now become a hindrance to it. But the masses of social-democratic workers, who long before Hitler's advent to power were torn with doubts, but could not decide to make an organizational break with their party, are now learning from their own experience that the liberation of the working class is possible by revolutionary means alone. This was pointed out to them by the Communist Party of Germany headed by Ernst Thaelmann, and is the path which the Party will pursue in the future as the vanguard of the German proletariat, until victory has been secured over the fascist dictatorship and until Soviet Germany has been established, despite all stupendous sacrifices.

The first big electoral victory of the National-Socialist Party in September, 1930, signalized the growth of the fascist danger in Germany. The social-democrats, Brandlerites and Trotzkyites declared the fascist dictatorship to be the dictatorship of the petty bourgeoisie. What was needed here was complete clarity introduced as sharply as possible. In his report to the Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Germany on January 15, 1931, Ernst Thaelmann said:

> "Wherein lies the class content of the idea of the fascist dictatorship? If we examine this problem we discover that the class content of the fascist dictatorship is undoubtedly the dictatorship of finance capital, just as is bourgeois democracy. That is to say, it is not the class content that has changed, but only the methods. The forms of domination are changed, and not the content of this domination."

How to struggle against fascism? There is only one force that can beat down and smash fascism, and this is the force of the working class united under revolutionary leadership.

> "In our resolution we point out that the revolutionary policy of the united front represents the

main link in proletarian policy in Germany. Comrades, this formulation is of great weight. We have chosen it after ripe deliberation, so as to stress the ever-growing importance of the revolutionary policy of the united front from below for the development of the mass struggle and to strengthen the prerequisites of the revolutionary crisis in Germany." (Thaelmann, *The Revolutionary Way Out and the C.P.G.*—German edition.)

The nationalist and social demagogy of the national-socialists had to be exposed with the greatest energy. The masses had to be shown that the Nazis are the party of finance capital, establishing a regime of bloody terror against the working class in the interests of the moneybags. Ernst Thaelmann stated in the same report:

"It is only by bringing to the consciousness of the masses of the employees, petty bourgeoisie, officials and rural population, who are the main mass of adherents of Hitlerite fascism, that it is not national-socialism, but we, who are the only Party in which millions of fighters are struggling for the emancipation of Germany from the Versailles yoke and capitalist bondage, and from the enslavement of the Young Plan, that we will become their deliverers, and win them to the side of the class struggle."

But the German working class will be able to struggle successfully against fascism only insofar as the Communist Party will succeed in destroying the mass influence of social-democracy. The following excerpt from the same report still remains a practical guide for immediate action:

"We must create a clear understanding of the fact that it is impossible to smash Hitler's party, without smashing the mass influence of social-democracy, particularly among the proletariat. We must achieve a clear understanding of the fact that it will be impossible to overcome a possible future government of Hitler, unless, in good time, we direct the main blow against social-democracy for the purpose of winning over the most important strata of the working class. For it is precisely social-democracy which is catching or is already holding the wide masses of the working class captive in the interests of the bourgeoisie, and is thereby evading the class struggle, or coming out directly against it."

In the spring of 1932, three candidates were nominated for the post of president of the German Republic: Hindenburg, Thaelmann, and Hitler. In this election Thaelmann embodied the united fighting front of the German proletariat. Even the workers, who for one or another reason gave their votes to Hindenburg, were forced to see in Ernst Thaelmann the candidate of the German proletariat. His tour throughout Germany during the electoral campaign was a special kind of triumph of the idea of the united front.

During the first days and weeks of Hitler's advent to power the Welses and Leiparts did all they could to betray the gigantic organization of German workers to the arbitrary will of fascism and thus to secure for themselves a warm spot in the sun of the Third Empire. The Welses and Leiperts negotiated with Goering and Frick. This was at the time when Ernst Thaelmann was arrested.

There is not a single worker's dwelling in Germany, not a single enterprise, where the terrible tortures and mockery exercised by the fascist hangmen over near friends, comrades of each worker, have not sown indelibly fierce hatred against the fascists, and where the proletarians are not suffering fears for the life of one dear and near to them.

During the whole of these fourteen months that the fascist beasts have held our Ernst Thaelmann in their clutching talons, the anxious question as to what is the latest regarding Ernst Thaelmann never ceases to be uttered. This question is asked not only by Communists who are alarmed about the fate of their favorite leader. This question is being and has been asked with no less sympathy by members of the Reichsbanner, with whom we have chanced to discuss either the joint anti-fascist struggle or their joining the Communist Party of Germany. This question has been asked by the social-democratic comrades, workers in whose apartments we have frequently found shelter, and felt ourselves safest when hiding from the fascist police. Nor did this question cease to sound even when the brave speeches of Comrade Dimitroff at the Leipzig trial made the hearts of millions of German toilers beat faster. In this question we hear the alarm not for the life and health of one man, but the alarm for the true genuine leader of the Communist Party of Germany, reflecting the fact that both the social-democratic workers, and the millions of all the toilers who are not inclined towards fascism, place their only hope in the Communist Party of Germany, which no brutal, bloody terror will succeed in throttling.

When speaking about Bolshevik cadres at the Wedding Congress of the Communist Party of Germany, soon after the blood bath organized by Zoergiebel, Comrade Thaelmann called for the

". . . greatest readiness in our own ranks to make sacrifices not only in the political but also in the material sphere. In the struggle against our class enemy, we must defend our positions to the very end. Not a single Communist should leave the post assigned to him by the Party. Even in the conditions of the most bitter struggle we must fulfill our revolutionary duty without hesitation."

In letters of blood written in the annals of history, the Communist Party of Germany has given proof that these prerequisites for the fulfillment of the tasks of the Bolshevik Party are still alive within it. The merit of having forged the steeled and tempered Communist Party of Germany belongs in the first place to Ernst Thaelmann who, by his conduct in the torture chamber of the secret police as well, sets an example to the revolutionary workers. The fascist henchmen of German monopolist capital, overcome with the lust for revenge at the heroic struggle of German Communists against the Hitlerite dictatorship which is more and more losing ground in the midst of political and economic difficulties, wish to make an end of Ernst Thaelmann, to wreak their vengeance on him. In the person of its great and intrepid leader, they want to deal a blow at the Communist Party of Germany and to sow downheartedness in the ranks of its heroic fighters. Only the further development and intensification of the anti-fascist mass struggle and the protest of the many millions of the proletariat throughout the world can save the life of Ernst Thaelmann and the lives of the thousands of revolutionary workers who are wasting away in the torture chambers of the fascist butchers.

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THE LESSONS OF THE KRAKOW UPRISING IN 1923

By B. XAVER

THE Krakow uprising developed from the growing wave of the strike struggles of the proletariat which during 1923 spread like an avalanche throughout Poland. The Krakow uprising was the peak and the highest form of the class battles of the toiling masses at that period.

The basis of the strike struggles of the proletariat and unrest in the countryside was the deep economic and financial crisis which had gripped Poland. The bourgeoisie was looking for a way out of the crisis by means of a new anti-Soviet war, by strengthening the apparatus of its class dictatorship, by a furious attack against the standard of living of the toiling masses and by increasing the economic and national oppression of the so-called national minorities. The bourgeoisie utilized a policy of inflation to shift the colossal expenditures on armaments, on the upkeep of the state apparatus and on the restoration of industry, onto the backs of the toiling masses who were greatly impoverished by the four years of the World War and the anti-Soviet war that followed it. The wages of the workers had been lowered to one-third of their pre-war level. The government's expenditure on the armed forces alone was 33 per cent above the actual income of the government for 1922-23. The landlords and capitalists paid almost no taxes. The state debt reached astronomical figures. The introduction of inflation, which for a time succeeded in reviving industry and "saving" the balance of foreign trade, a policy which was carried out at the expense of the terrific impoverishment of the broad masses of toilers, had already revealed during the second half of 1923 the reverse side of the medal which was indeed a catastrophic picture. It had brought about a complete disorganization of industrial, commercial and credit relations and also introduced demoralization into the state apparatus.

Dissatisfaction found its way into the villages. The agricultural laborers and poor peasants who were in want of the land and who were unable to migrate to the towns or abroad followed the example of the industrial workers and entered the struggle. But the middle peasantry also had plenty of reason to be dissatisfied with the monstrous and huge discrepancy between prices of agricultural products and of manufactured goods. Ferment even found its way into the ranks of the civil servants. This privileged section, to whom Prime Minister Witos declared in a moment of frankness that "tomorrow things will be worse", resorted on the one hand to proletarian methods of struggle, *i.e.,* strikes, and on the other hand to such means as graft and embezzlement. In Western Ukraine and Western White Russia which were "finally" recognized by the Council of Ambassadors in 1923 as composite parts of Poland and which were looked upon as colonies by Polish imperialism, the national liberation struggle of the masses who were suffering under a double yoke was intensified. This struggle found its expression in revolts throughout the countryside, in setting fire to the landlords' country seats, in the assassination of police officials, etc.

The toiling masses were rapidly moving to the Left. In the camp of the bourgeoisie there was to be observed a sharpening of the struggle for power and over methods of executing their rule between the Pilsudski group which had been supplanted from the government and ruling camp of Chieno-Piast. All the internal contradictions — economic, social and national—of the five-year-old Polish state began to be revealed in all their clarity and dynamic force. The Polish state was cracking at its very foundations, and rotting at the top, or to use the picturesque words of Premier Witos, "it was going to the devil". *The revolutionary crisis was rapidly maturing.*

The situation in Poland, ripe for revolutionary events, was very much influenced by the U.S.S.R. on the East and by Germany on the West. The example of the victorious October Revolution showed the masses the way out of their desperate situation. The development of revolutionary battles in Germany kindled in the hearts of the toiling masses of Poland the spirit of struggle and internationalism.

Alongside of Germany, Poland was the weakest link in the chain of imperialist countries.

Already at the beginning of 1923 the economic strikes of the proletariat, which sprang up in one industrial center after another, had assumed a mass character and sharp forms.

In January, 1923, the textile workers of Lodz, Bialystok and Bielitz-Biala went on strike. This strike assumed its sharpest forms in Bielitz-Biala. The textile workers were soon joined by the metal workers, the municipal workers, etc. The strike developed into a general strike of all the workers of this province, and spread partly to Krakow province as well. The workers occupied the electric station and gas works and stopped the city supply of gas and electricity. The government dispatched troops to the scene of the struggle. The strike ended in a victory for the workers, and was of great importance for the development of strike struggles in the future.

In June and July, after a sharp fall in the value of Polish currency and a sudden rise in the cost of living, a new and much stronger strike wave spread throughout the whole country.

In June a strike of the railway workers broke out in Lwow. The workers went on strike in spite of the instructions to the contrary issued by the leaders of the P.P.S. (Polish Socialist Party) and the reformist railway workers' union.

In reply to the government's decree dismissing the strikers, the strike spread to all the big cities of Western Ukraine—Stanislav, Stryj, Drohobycz, Sambor, Rava-Russka, Chodorow, Przemysl, Nowy-Sopcz, Tarnow, and Krakow.

In July there was a strike of the metal workers in Warsaw, Strachowice, and Bielitz-Biala (for the second time), a strike of miners in the Dombrowa Basin, of textile workers in Lodz and other districts, a general strike of textile workers, building workers, the workers of the saw mills in the Trans-Carpathian region, etc.

All of these strike struggles which sprang up under the influence of the activities of the Communist Party or as spontaneous strikes, the leadership of which was taken over by the P.P.S. in order to betray them, were accompanied by mass street demonstrations of strikers and unemployed. The main demand put forward by the workers was the political demand for the resignation of the Chieno-Piast government.

In October the proletariat of the basic industrial centers, such as Silesia, the Dombrowa Basin and Lodz, entered the struggle. This was followed by the entry into the struggle of the railway workers and postal employees, who were suffering from extremely low wages as a result of the rapid fall in the value of Polish currency.

On October 9 the metal workers and miners of Upper Silesia came out on strike. This campaign was led by the "Committee of 21", a committee appointed by the Congress of Factory Committees and led by Communists. On October 11 the railway workers and postal workers declared a strike, which turned into a general strike. The strike in Upper Silesia reached its peak on October 15 when the strikers of the whole of Silesia marched in a huge demonstration on Kattowitz, the seat of the provincial government. This mighty strike created an indelible impression upon the toiling masses of the whole of Poland and had a tremendous influence upon the further development of the class struggles of the proletariat.

The Dombrowa Basin rose in a strike of solidarity with the proletariat of Silesia. This strike was begun in individual mines under the leadership of the Communist Party. On October 22 the textile workers of the Lodz district also went on strike. In the strike committee elected by the masses the Communists had considerable influence. The strike soon spread to Girardowo and other textile centers.

On the same day the locomotive engineers declared a strike, which began first in Krakow and Lwow. The engineers were joined by the shopmen and the rest of the railway workers. The postal workers followed almost immediately. The P.P.S. newspapers called this strike a "yellow strike", a "wild strike", etc. The official organ of the P.P.S. Railway Workers' Union wrote "in view of the danger which this chaotic and wild strike threatens rail transport it is necessary to *use all possible means to liquidate it*". The P.P.S. members of Parliament discussed "measures to liquidate the strike with the Vice-President of the government, Korfanty, and they asked that the Vice-President should intervene in the strike, and showed great interest in the financial problems confronting the country". (*Gazeta Warszawska*).

"These negotiations were strictly secret", wrote *Robotnik* on February 5.

After ensuring itself the active support of the whole of the P.P.S. leadership, the government decided to use "all means" to suppress the strike. On October 29, posters appeared in Warsaw and two days later in Krakow, announcing the establishment of court-martial and the militarization of the railway workers. But the measures taken by the government did not give rise to panic or the desire to surrender among the workers but only called forth an ever growing indignation and a stronger will to fight. None of the newly militarized railway workers voluntarily presented themselves for work. The strike began to spread quickly, and there was a danger that it would spontaneously develop into a general strike throughout the country. The leaders of the P.P.S. understood only too well that if they were to save their influence and provide an outlet for the revolutionary sentiments of the masses they would have to call a general strike. Moreover, among the rank and file of the P.P.S., there was great unrest and dissatisfaction with the policy being pursued by the Executive Committee of the Party. A delegation of the Krakow organization of the P.P.S. even came to Warsaw and threatened the Executive Committee that the whole of their local organization would join the Communists if the party leadership refused to issue the call for a general strike.

The Central Executive Committee of the P.P.S. and the Central Commission of the Trade Unions decided to call a general strike for November 5. But simultaneously they worked out a detailed plan for betraying the strike and breaking it during its very first stages. It was decided that the textile workers and miners should join the strike only on

November 7 "in view of the fact that they were worn out after their recent struggles". After this, according to the plans of the P.P.S., the Dombrowa Basin, Upper Silesia and Lodz, the three major industrial centers of Poland, would "join" the general strike. The bourgeois, P.P.S. and the Populist press conducted a campaign of furious slander against the Communists speaking of them as the "agents of Moscow". The government organized mass arrests of Communists, charging them with the organization of an explosion in the Warsaw fortress, the work actually of provocateurs and prepared to introduce the death penalty as a punishment for Communist activity.

But no government terror was in the position by then to stop the struggle of the proletariat and the civil servants who followed them.

* * *

The general strike began on the morning of November 5. Railway traffic stopped throughout the country. All of Warsaw was on strike. Krakow, while not a big industrial center, soon occupied a foremost place in the struggle because of the previous incredibly stubborn and drawn-out strike of the railway workers, and became one of the most important centers of the general strike.

A weak railway service was maintained by the army railway battalions and those militarized railway workers who were rounded up by the gendarmes and police during night raids. From the very first day of the strike the situation was extremely tense. In Warsaw tens of thousands of workers gathered together and demonstrated. The situation was heading towards a decisive struggle.

On November 5 great masses of strikers came out in the streets of Krakow. Sharp clashes between demonstrators and police took place. The troops sent out against the strikers behaved in such a way that their commanders sent them to the barracks without delay. They left the streets to the accompaniment of the shouts of the demonstrators. In the evening that same day, a rumor was spread throughout th ecity that the soldiers of the 20th Infantry Regiment had mutinied.

Anticipating that "things would get worse", the government hastily dispatched military and police reinforcements.

On the night of November 5 the Wawel (the former royal citadel perched on a hill) was literally transformed into a fortress. Artillery was placed in position and ranged upon the Workers' Center and other strategical points in the city. The air force was given the necessary instructions. Machine guns were placed in good time at a number of points. The P.P.S. leaders, who had kept aside from the movement, did everything in their power in trying to convince the authorities that the utilization of armed forces alone in the crushing of the strike is a grave tactical error.

> "All our arguments, requests and advice that the Government should not do this since the *masses must get together* during big strikes and have to be informed, while an eye has to be kept upon them to ensure rigid discipline and make all other agitation and provocation impossible, were of no avail."

This was the complaint of the organ of the Krakow P.P.S., the *Naprzod*. But the government none the less insisted on its own tactics and put a ban on all meetings.

* * *

On November 6, all the streets in Krakow leading to the Workers' Center were occupied by strong police detachments from early morning. In the heated atmosprere generated the previous day this only intensified the indignation of the masses. In similar situations it happens that large masses of people suddenly realize their position and are united by their collective will to offer resistance. The P.P.S. leaders called upon the workers to be calm, to keep cool and to disperse, but the workers refused to do so. The workers reached the Workers' Center and the Planty on Dunajewsky Street singly and in small groups. The entrance to the Workers' Center itself was occupied by a patrol of over 20 policemen, who were reinforced by two companies of the 16th Infantry Regiment. The following incident is characteristic of the sentiment of the soldiers. When, after passing through streets full of people the soldiers came to Dunajewsky Street, the officer ordered them to fix bayonets. The first company fulfilled this order but the second company did not. This behavior of the soldiers went like an electric current through the masses, who greeted the soldiers with shouts of "Long Live the Soldiers", "These are Our Men", etc.

When these companies took up the position immediately behind the police detachment, the masses of workers in the street felt that they had armed allies behind the police lines. From the indictment in the Krakow case we learn that in spite of the fact that the P.P.S. "workers' guard" did all in its power to prevent it, the factory workers and working women at about nine o'clock began a slow but ever more insistent advance against the police cordon. The police fired upon the crowd, and firing also began from the windows of the Krakow Hotel. For an instant the crowd moved back, but then something happened which suddenly

changed the situation to the advantage of the workers. Two peasant carts loaded with cabbage were approaching from Bashtowa Street, when a worker named Petszik jumped on one of the carts, seized hold of the reins and whip and drove the horses at the police. A dense crowd of workers followed the cart. All of this took place so suddenly that the police fell back in confusion and began to retreat in disorder towards the soldiers stationed in the rear. The police cordon was broken, and the ranks of the soldiers were disorganized. At the same time a crowd which had gathered advanced from the direction of the Workers' Center, the Planty District and the Krakow Hotel. The police and soldiers were surrounded and mixed up among the demonstrators and were immediately disarmed amid loud cries of greetings in honor of the soldiers, who were clearly pleased at the turn of events. The disarmed soldiers were taken by the workers into the Workers' Center. Thus the fraternity of soldiers and workers was actually put into practice during the Krakow uprising. As for the police, they were "beaten with sticks, cabbage heads, bottles and stones", says the indictment. The bold initiative of the worker Petszik, the openly displayed sympathy of the soldiers to the workers, the beating up of the police who only the previous day were so brutal in crushing the demonstration of the workers and who only a few hours ago had fired into the midst of the demonstrators—all of this tremendously raised the enthusiasm of the masses for struggle, and their faith in their own strength.

Armed with a few hundred rifles the workers immediately took up the offensive. After some firing on Dunajewski Street and the Planty District not one policeman remained. Towards this time, a detachment of police under the command of Commissioner Fleck was sent from Garbarska Street to the rescue of the soldiers and police detachment now attacked by the workers. When Fleck's detachment reached the Krakow Hotel the workers who were gathered there attacked the police with sticks and stones. The police formed into a square and after opening fire began to retreat down Garbarska Street. However, when the workers received armed reinforcements from Dunajewski Street and opened fire on the police, the latter retreated and "were compelled to seek shelter" and finally, "were forced to seek refuge in gateways, etc., carrying with them two of their wounded"—so reads the indictment.

After the workers had smashed the police square formation the 50 policemen who remained under command of Commissioner Fleck, were compelled to hide in one of the houses in Garbarska Street. The Commissioner himself discarded his uniform for civilian clothes and left his subordinates "and did not return". The whole detachment were taken prisoners by the workers. The same thing happened to another detachment of police which was driven off by the advancing workers from the opposite end of Dunajewski Street. Other police detachments simply "melted" under the pressure of the workers' attacks. Thus, for example, the detachment commanded by Commission Ptaszkowski which at the start had over 100 men was reduced to 30. The police sought shelter singly and changed their uniforms for civilian clothes. Several of the police detachments that showed resistance and took up positions in various buildings were surrounded by the workers, and were only saved by the P.P.S. late in the night. The comparative ease with which the workers succeeded in defeating the forces of the police concentrated in the center of the city is to be explained not only by the amount of firearms the workers received after disarming the soldiers but also by the fact that the behavior of the soldiers (infantry) had a demoralizing effect on the fighting capacity of the police forces.

It is necessary to emphasize here a factor of first rate importance—the fact that the workers immediately took up the offensive, and showed great decisiveness in the struggle right from the very beginning.

But as the uprising lacked revolutionary leadership as well as a plan of action, and the insurgent workers attacked without organization, this offensive was confined at first to Dunajewski and Garbarska Streets, in addition to the Planty and its immediate vicinity.

After the defeat of the police in the first battle, the workers were not idle for one minute. They absolutely correctly foresaw that the enemy would undertake a new offensive against them and therefore they occupied strategic positions and stationed themselves in the windows, in gateways, on balconies and roofs of houses, without for the time being leaving Dunajewski Street. One of these strategic centers important from the viewpoint of street fighting was the Krakow Hotel. From this building it was possible to fire at long range along Basztowa Street, Garbarska Street, and finally Dunajewski Street.

Meanwhile General Czikel, the general in command of the Krakow garrison, upon hearing of the results of the first clashes between the police and the workers and of the fate of the battalion of the 16th Infantry Regiment, decided to dispatch squadrons of the 8th Cavalry Regiment to the scene of action. These were "our beloved cavalry" which General Czikel considered "the best means of pacification". "The Polish masses always greet the cavalry in a friendly way and retreat before it, *in any case this has been so up to now* [!]" declared General Czikel

in court. The Second and Third Squadrons received "exact" instructions to establish "order" but when the Second Squadron reached Dunajewski Street they found the street empty but nevertheless the cavalry was met with a volley from the windows and gateways in the Planty, etc. The Uhlans had no time to dismount, and it was too late to retreat—the commander gave the order to charge! The cavalry went forward at a gallop but by the time they reached the Central Cafe their front ranks were broken. The workers had spilled water on the pavement and the horses slipped upon the wet asphalt; bullets brought the horses down and they crushed their riders under them. The rear ranks which also had to face a hail of bullets fell on top of this pile of Uhlans and horses. The street became a scene of terrible panic, everywhere the cries and groans of wounded were heard. The crowd caught hold of the horses that galloped down the street riderless. "The crowd deprived the wounded cavalrymen, or those flung from their horses, of their arms and ammunition, took them prisoners and removed them to the Workers' Center or the gates of the neighboring houses". (From the indictment). Thus, the Second Squadron of the 8th Uhlan Regiment no longer existed as a fighting force of General Czikel.

The commander of the Third Squadron was more careful. He left one platoon on the market square in reserve and with the remaining two platoons he advanced in a roundabout way through Basztowa Street to the Krakow Hotel. But as soon as the first platoon reached the corner of Basztowa and Dunajewski Street, it was met with a volley of rifle fire. Not waiting to meet the same fate as the second squadron, the Uhlans retreated to the market in confusion and panic and took up positions of defense in Sukennice. Part of the armed workers pursued the cavalry troops.

General Czikel decided to use larger forces. The remaining two squadrons, as well as the machine gun detachment, were ordered to advance and "act mercilessly". These squadrons were accompanied by two armored cars, the "Jasek" and the "Dowbor". Czikel decided to attack Dunajewski Street from two sides. Captain Bochenek with the fourth squadron took a roundabout route through Rajska, Karmelitska and Garbarska Streets. His task was to attack from the direction of the Krakow Hotel. The remaining forces advanced through Podwal Street under the command of Colonel Bsowski. The fourth squadron met with resistance upon reaching the corner of Rajska Street where six horses were killed. On Garbarska Street the troops were met with hostile shouts and threats from the workers. But the brave commander considered it below his dignity to take heed of the situation in his rear. In giving the order to charge, this warrior exclaimed: "Now blood will flow". On the corner of Dunajewski Street only three of the 76 horses did not slip on the wet asphalt, or fall from the bullets of the workers. Captain Bochenek was one of the first killed. The Uhlans made haste to get out of range of the hail of rifle fire and fled for shelter in gateways, etc., where they were discovered by workers, who were mainly unarmed.

The First Squadron did not even try to attack; after meeting the first volley from the armed workers it retreated from Podwal Street and moved towards the market place in order to help the Third Squadron. The armored cars did the same, and turned out to be of no help to General Czikel because their machine gun fire was not effective for the workers cleverly hid in gateways, while the armed workers occupied well hidden and well fortified positions. The machine gun detachments were simply recalled to the Wawel. The workers *advanced on* the market place all along the line. Captain Lukasjewicz quickly dismounted his men, sent the horses to Bratski Street and took up a position and spread his squadron in a chain along Sukennice Street, and together with the remnants of the police forces, held back the advance of armed and unarmed workers with great difficulty. The active participation of the unarmed masses in the struggle was a characteristic feature of the Krakow uprising. We have already seen in the case of the police reserves under the command of Commissioner Fleck and the Fourth Squadron, how the unarmed workers carried on the fight using stones, bottles, sticks, etc., and thus repeatedly obtained firearms. In their struggle for the market place the workers showed examples of extraordinary initiative and courage. Acting without any centralized leadership and general plan, groups of armed workers burst into the houses which encircle the market place and into the streets nearby, took up positions on balconies, roofs and windows and fired upon the police and cavalry. The armored cars which patrolled the streets tried to stop the advance of the workers by furious machine-gun fire which produced no special results. The workers left the streets and advanced along the roof tops. In the market place besides the police and troops a uniformed fascist detachment consisting mainly of university students took part in the struggle against the workers.

A characteristic feature of the Krakow rebellion is the following episode in the struggle for the market place. Captain Lukasjewicz "ordered the police to leave because they were shooting wildly and were only hindering him". When the workers noticed the police were leaving the scene of action, they understood this to mean that the cavalry had come over to their side. The workers ran from the neigh-

borhood streets and greeted the cavalry. One group of workers even approached Captain Lukasjewicz and carried him shoulder high as a sign of greeting. However, the workers were soon to pay with their blood for these illusions regarding the officers. The officers began to fire into the crowd from revolvers and the struggle became even more fierce. This incident shows how great a mistake was the fact that a consistent revolutionary leadership was wanting. This incredibly bold onslaught carried out mainly by unarmed workers could have had completely different results if these workers had begun by disarming and doing away with the officers. The cavalry troops consisted of Ukrainian peasants who were ill-disposed to their Polish officers but who could not understand the workers.

The fierce struggle on the market place continued for over one hour. Captain Lukasjewicz was seriously wounded. The position of the cavalry became more and more critical. Three military planes flew above the housetops at a low altitude creating great excitement in the ranks of the workers. At 11 o'clock, on instructions from General Czikel, a third armored car, the "Dziadek" left Dombia. But this proved absolutely unsuccessful. As soon as the armored car reached the exit of Krowoderska Street it was fired upon from behind and upon reaching Basztowa Street it was met with a volley of shots from the windows and roofs. The roof of the armored car was smashed in four places, and of the personnel in charge of it one soldier was killed and two wounded. In its desire to get out of this situation as quickly as possible, the car dashed down Basztowa Street opening a terrific fire from all its machine guns. However, because of his small field of vision and very likely because those in the armored car were all agitated, its driver failed to notice the heap of dead horses in front of the Krakow Hotel. The car had to stop, but did not succeed in retreating. The workers boldly attacked the armored car whose guns were shooting uninterruptedly and one of the workers *succeeded in driving the end of his rifle into the gear and stopped the machine.*

> " . . . Somebody opened the door and fifteen rifles were directed against me and my driver. Corporal Bernal fired twice with the machine gun. Then we were ordered to go out. . ." (Testimony of Lieutenant Penkowski, commander of the armored car.)

Thus we see that there was "someone" inside the armored car as well who opened the door and helped the workers to disarm the crew, and both the crew and the armored car were taken to the Workers' Center. This, however, was not accomplished without difficulty, for when the workers disarmed the crew, another armored car, the "Jasek", appeared. When its commander saw what had happened he ordered the crew to direct their machine gun fire on the radiator of the captured armored car in order to damage it and render it useless for the workers. The attack of the "Jasek" was repulsed and *the armored car was repaired by the workers.* But here again the workers committed a mistake. They followed the advice of the P.P.S. fakers and instead of utilizing the powerful car in their struggle, they brought it to the Workers' Center and dismounted the machine guns and ammunition. The automobile itself was thus reduced to a harmless armored box which served as a platform for the P.P.S. speakers in their agitation against the uprising and further struggle.

After hearing about the fate of the armored car, General Czikel completely lost his self-confidence. The first battalion of the Podcholjanski Rifles which was advancing on the city was ordered to return to its barracks and "wait for further orders". The cavalry on the market place were surrounded from almost all sides and their situation was critical. Not only were they in danger of being driven out of the market place but they were threatened with being completely wiped out. All the new armed detachments of workers were marching through the streets with banners bearing the slogan "Take Over Power" (according to evidence of eye witnesses at the Krakow trial). Among these workers there were groups of soldiers who had either been disarmed or had voluntarily joined the rebels. Workers' patrols with fixed bayonets marched through the streets. "Krakow felt that it was deprived of its safety and its population was terrified", wrote one of the bourgeois papers after the uprising. General Czikel, who had every reason not to send new troops for struggle which would put them in contact with the revolting workers, could now only resort to his artillery and air forces and to bombard Krakow. But the government gave no definite reply to his urgent telegram. The following conversation took place between Galecki, the governor of Krakow, and Kernik, the Home Minister:

> Galecki: "What does the honorable Minister wish and what advice does he give us?"
> Kernik: "I do not know the situation."
> Galecki: "Neither do I."

The Central Committee of the P.P.S. and the P.P.S. Parliamentary group who received from their colleagues in Krakow information on the development of the uprising, worked out a plan of liquidating the uprising and approached the government with it. This plan consisted of the following: The P.P.S. calls off the general strike, the soldiers stop,

hostilities and return to the barracks, the P.P.S. undertakes the disarming of the workers. In Krakow the P.P.S. deputies, Marek in the Provincial Council and Bobrowski in General Czikel's headquarters, and Klemensyevich in the police headquarters, were preparing the same sort of treachery. Finally, the government after receiving many urgent messages from Krakow, decided to abandon its "strong-hand" tactics, and adopted the P.P.S. plan as the only means of saving the situation. The Home Minister Kernik informed Governor Galecki "that he agreed that the deputies be given the opportunity of quieting the mob, and allowed military operations to cease with a view to concentrating the military and police forces". (Galecki's testimony).

The concentration of military and police forces required time. But there was a danger that the workers of Warsaw and other important industrial centers would hear about the Krakow events while the general strike was on. In Warsaw in the afternoon of November 6, the P.P.S. called off the general strike and the government declared its willingness to cancel its plans of militarization. Simultaneously Vice-Minister for Home Affairs Olpinski was sent to Krakow in place of Governor Galecki and General Zeligowski, who as the P.P.S. *Naprzod* wrote was "one of Pilsudski's trusted men" was dispatched to Krakow to replace General Czikel. Zeligowski received orders to "concentrate the military and police forces" and to do what Czikel failed to do, if the P.P.S. were not successful in disarming the workers. This fact speaks for itself, and completely shows up the P.P.S. lie that the Pilsudski-ites were the cause of the Krakow uprising. General Czikel and Bobrowski, the deputy, worked out a detailed plan of action. The P.P.S. plan of a so-called "armistice" was accepted and was immediately published. The troops were ordered to cease hostilities and return to their barracks. On the basis of an "agreed view", the chief of staff Przedmirski established a demarcation line on the map of Krakow which could not be violated by the military. This line bordered on the district where the workers were to "ensure safety". This demarcation line, according to the agreement, was far from military buildings. The guardroom on the market place remained in the hands of the troops. Actually there were two demarcation lines.

> "The first," General Czikel testified, "was agreed upon with the deputy Bobrowski, and ran along Dunajewski Street, the Planty, Dluga, Garbarska, and Studenecki Streets, while the second was a tactical line, announced in an order issued in the evening. This line was to defend the Wawel and its reserve forces which were kept in readiness in case the workers, as was rumored, tried to attack the guardroom and the munition stores during the night. This regrouping during the night in the neighborhood of the Wawel allowed us to establish a second, internal line. . . . "(Testimony of Czikel.)

Only the second "tactical" line was of real importance; it permitted General Czikel to concentrate his forces in the immediate neighborhood of the Wawel.

The grave mistake of the revolting workers consisted in the confidence they held in the P.P.S. leaders. The workers agreed to accept the armistice instead of establishing their own military-political center to lead the uprising and stopping Czikel from concentrating his forces. They should have mobilized the masses of the working class in the neighborhood of Krakow and in Krakow coal basin for a continuation of the struggle to a victorious end. The armistice and the recall of the troops, the removal of Galecki and Czikel from their posts and the dispatch of Zeligowski were declared by the P.P.S. leaders to be a great and final victory for the workers. By its subtle maneuvers the P.P.S. posed as a supporter of the uprising. The deputy Marek even claimed to be the "main leader" of the armed forces of the workers. The complete evacuation of the police and military forces from the streets, besides its military tactical objectives, under the conditions of a *spontaneous uprising*, such as the Krakow uprising was, was directed towards demobilizing the fighting energy of the workers. This maneuver was successful. The afternoon was a critical time and a turning point in the Krakow uprising. The captured armored car, decorated with red flags and bunting, patrolled the streets of Krakow, and from the top of this car the P.P.S. leaders delivered eloquent speeches about the victory of the uprising and called upon the workers to store their arms in the Workers' Center, "until they would be needed again". At the same time the P.P.S. spread provocative rumors to the effect that many weapons were in the hands of "suspicious individuals". The P.P.S., of course, took care not to mention the fact that they had called off the general strike. At the same time the P.P.S. leaders (Bobrowski, Marek, Klemensowicz, Stanczik and others) were feverishly mobilizing the most trustworthy and especially the older members of the Party, members of the Legion and "Strelez", etc., and began the systematic, painstaking and "concrete" task of disarming the workers.

Many of the class-conscious workers felt that there was something peculiar being prepared by the P.P.S. and that it was necessary to continue the struggle. Many of these workers were convinced that the offensive must be kept up and that the enemy had recalled his forces only to concentrate them for a new attack. Everywhere demands could

be heard for a march on the Wawel, the workers were demanding to "hang Czikel", to capture the railway station, post office, etc. But the mass of workers were no longer unanimous. Instead of attacking the enemy in order to stop him from concentrating his forces, the idea of going over to the defensive began to prevail among the insurgents as a result of the treacherous work of the P.P.S. The P.P.S. leaders knew that this rejection of offensive tactics and the going over to the defensive was the beginning of the end of the uprsiing. Part of the workers took up positions in places where enemy attacks were expected. Other workers were formed into small detachments who searched the houses for hidden policemen. Many armed workers after capturing the market place and surrounding the guardroom, to which the cavalry troops had retreated, spent their time making sport of cavalry officers who were compelled to eat the "dirty hash" brought to them from the Wawal. The "brave" officers in reply to this pointed to the Jews as the "organizers of the revolt". The P.P.S. cunningly developed its tactics further. The P.P.S. saw the effects of distracting the attention of the masses from the Wawal, the barracks and other important military points and themselves began to organize "defense" detachments and special search parties to arrest policemen. With the help of these search parties the *P.P.S. succeeded in hiding many police commissioners and policemen in private houses and even in releasing and sending entire police detachments to Czikel.* Thus at 3 o'clock in the morning a certain P.P.S. functionary Zifer led a police detachment consisting of 30 men under Commissioner Ptaszkowski through a backyard surrounded by workers. The police maintained their rifles which they hid under their coats. Lieutenant Penkowski who was captured by the workers escaped from the Workers' Center, dressed in civilian clothes; he was led out by the P.P.S. functionary Reimann. Such cases were numerous.

Besides doing this work, the P.P.S. was hastily arming its more devoted members. "We were in need of firearms in order to maintain order and disarm the workers", said Bobrowski. In order to disarm the workers the P.P.S. resorted to the most subtle tactics, to provocation and force. P.P.S. detachments were sent to Krakow to disarm individual or small groups of workers they met. In the Workers' Center a "grand supper" with vodka, etc., was prepared. *"During this supper we took away the firearms and gave them over to the military"*, the P.P.S. functionary Mastek boasted a few years later. However, the main weapon in the hands of the P.P.S. was the fact that the workers had not yet completely outlived their illusions with regard to the P.P.S. Many workers believed that the P.P.S. had honestly gone over to the side of the uprising. Many workers were under the illusion that the enemy had been defeated and that the struggle was over, that now it was necessary to pile the firearms in a safe place, namely in the Workers' Center. They were fully convinced that in case of necessity they could take up arms again. The workers did not understand the lesson taught by the experience of all armed uprisings, namely that during an uprising there is not and cannot be any safe place for hiding firearms, that during an armed uprising the workers must not for one moment give up their weapons; on the contrary, they must always be prepared for action.

Late in the night the firearms including rifles, machine guns, lances, and cavalry equipment hidden in the Workers' Center and guarded by a P.P.S. group were loaded on to army trucks and taken away.

The despair of the workers knew no bounds, when on the next day they saw for themselves how they had been shamefully betrayed. On the morning of the next day the P.P.S. published the manifesto of its District Committee calling off the general strike. But not one of the workers returned to work. The workers no longer listened to the speeches of the P.P.S. leaders. P.P.S. speakers were branded as traitors and thrown off the platforms. The masses were tremendously disillusioned but now they were powerless to do anything.

On the 7th, the captured armored car was returned to the barracks still undamaged. In the evening of that day "normal police service" was reestablished. The government was now in a position to calmly resort once more to arrests and persecution. The cries of tortured workers once more echoed through the corridors of the Krakow prison. At last the bourgeoisie was taking revenge for the hours of deadly fright to which it had been subjected.

On November 7, the situation changed to such an extent that the workers who still had firearms secretly brought them to the Workers' Center during the night. The general strike was on the decline and finally it came to an end. The militarized railway workers who had given up work despite the threat of the death penalty on receiving the first news of the Krakow uprising, also returned to work. Bobrowski, the P.P.S. deputy, had good reason to brag at the Krakow trial about the service of his party for the bourgeoisie.

• "For 29 years I have been a member of the Party. Our Party underwent even more difficult strikes and storms. I remember the great general strike after the Brest-Litowsk peace. The Vienna government dispatched the so-called 'Deutschmeister' troops to Krakow. We demanded that the police and troops be evacuated. This

was done by the government. . . . We were given the task of maintaining order in the city. And in spite of the absence of the police and the military we maintained perfect order. We have had the benefit of many years' practice and routine. . . . " (From Bobrowski evidence at the Krakow Trial.)

It is difficult to establish the amount of weapons captured by the Krakow workers on November 6. However, it is known that on the evening of that day, the P.P.S. turned over to General Czikel 310 rifles and 4 machine guns. Even a few days after this the workers continued to bring firearms to the Workers' Center. One thing, however, is indisputable—the workers gave up more firearms than they had captured from the police, and this was even admitted by the Home Minister Kernik, who at the Krakow trial, declared: "I state that many weapons, that belonged neither to the police nor the troops, were given up." This can only be explained by the fact that during the uprising the workers brought out hidden weapons (left over from the time when the Austrians were disarmed, etc.) and later fearing P.P.S. provocation (this was established at the Krakow trial) these firearms were surrendered. Thus the P.P.S. succeeded in "completely" disarming the Krakow proletariat.

During the street fighting on November 6, the casualties of the police and troops were: killed—3 officers, 11 privates and 1 fascist; wounded—10 officers, about 100 privates and 38 policemen. The losses of the workers were: 18 killed, 1 of whom was killed by machine gun fire, and another during a bayonet charge, 50 wounded (this figure includes only those taken to the hospital).

* * *

Taken in conjunction with the *heroic armed struggle of the proletariat of Austria, the general strike and barricade fights in France,* and the growing wave of revolutionary struggles of the proletariat and peasant revolts in Poland, the political and tactical lessons of the Krakow uprising assume great significance today.

1. The Krakow uprising was *the highest form of class struggle undertaken* by the proletariat of Poland in 1923.

> "During such actions," wrote Lenin in 1902 with regard to the powerful actions of the proletariat in Rostov-on-Don, "we see for ourselves how the general people's revolutionary uprising against the absolutist government ripens not only as an idea in the minds and programs of the revolutionaries, but also as the inevitable, practical and natural *next step* of the movement itself, as the result of the growing indignation, the growing experience, the growing courage of the masses." (V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works,* Vol. 5, p. 296. German edition.)

The Krakow uprising was the natural "*next step*" of the movement itself, it was a result of the growing indignation and increasing courage of the masses resulting from their former battles. Thus one can understand the miracles of heroism, self-sacrifice and revolutionary initiative manifested by the working class masses in the revolutionary struggle, one appreciates the huge potential energy hidden within the working class.

The Krakow uprising broke out as a result of the existence of these great forces of the proletariat, before whom history has placed the task of destroying the capitalist order and establishing the Socialist order on its ruins. By resorting to arms in the struggle against savage exploitation and white terror, the mass of the working class of Krakow who had only just previously followed the P.P.S., took to the path pointed out by Marx and Lenin, the path of the great October Revolution, the path of the Russian Bolsheviks. And only because a Bolshevik Communist Party was not at the head of this uprising, was the P.P.S., that basic social support of the bourgeoisie, able to fulfill its "historic mission" of undermining and destroying the uprising from within.

The Communist Party of Poland though fighting in the foremost ranks of the proletariat was unable, due to the fact that leadership of the Party was in the hands of the Right opportunist group of Kostrzewa-Warski, to raise itself to the height of the tasks confronting it. The Party was unable to utilize the favorable situation and independently lead the masses who were spontaneously rushing into the struggle. This explains why our Party was taken by surprise by the Krakow uprising and did nothing to organize active support of the uprising in the decisive industrial centres.

At the head of the Party there stood Right-Wing leaders (Warski, Kostrzewa) who had decisive influence in the Party and who were leading it into the swamp of opportunism both in its internal and international policy (the support of Trotsky and Brandler). As a result of the opportunistic *line* of the leadership in the application of the united front slogan, the slogan of the Workers' and Peasants' Government, the Communist Party of Poland was unable to become an independent force capable of capturing and maintaining power. Such problems as the armed uprising and work in the armed forces were overlooked in the Party. No one ever thought or spoke about them.

The first and basic lesson therefore of the Krakow

uprising is that the proletariat can be victorious in an armed uprising, can capture power only under the leadership of a steeled and experienced vanguard, the Bolshevik Party. The Communist Party must look upon the armed uprising as an art, and must prepare itself and prepare the masses for the armed uprising, utilizing the experience of previous uprisings, utilizing the experience of the development of the everyday class struggles. It must do so, so that from the very beginning the armed uprising is under the political and organizational leadership of the Party.

2. The Krakow uprising shows that in a *revolutionary situation* the masses on the streets arm themselves. At the same time Krakow stands out as a glaring confirmation of Lenin's teachings on the armed uprising, a teaching which he developed in the struggle against the counter-revolutionary conceptions of leaders of Menshevism (Kautsky and others). It also confirms the correctness of Lenin's views in his struggle against the mistaken theory of Rosa Luxemburg, for Rosa Luxemburg considered the "*only* and most important task of the proletarian Party" to convince the workers of the role of their "own movement." She considered the slogan of *arming* the workers simply "muddling the heads of the workers" and "distracting their attention from more important tasks." It was her opinion that

> ". . . the working people must understand that there is no use in hoping to win in a series of open struggles conducted as in a war, it is hopeless to conquer the regular troops of the enemy who are equipped with far better weapons. To hope for victory in this way is only a fantasy. With the mighty weapons of the militarist states of today the masses on the street must be prepared beforehand for terrible defeat in an open struggle with the troops." (Rosa Luxemburg, *What Next?*.)

But how did Rosa Luxemburg, the revolutionary, see the victory of the proletarian revolution?

> ". . . The only result of the *class consciousness* which we will succeed in producing even among a few sections of the troops will be that when the people enter the struggle for liberty, a certain section of the soldiers in reply to the order to fire on the masses, will come over to our side and another section will waver."

Krakow, as well as Moscow, Hamburg and in recent times Chapei and Vienna, show that a successful struggle with the regular troops in an "open battle" is by no means a fantasy. Pointing out to the workers on the basis of the experience of armed uprisings the necessity and the form of arming themselves is new one of the *basic tasks*. When the "people on the street" begin the struggle they must be prepared for unconditional victory and not for "terrible defeat". When the proletariat enters on an armed uprising, it cannot be better armed than the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie sees to this during the time it is in power. The proletariat enters the struggle armed with "whatever it has" (Lenin), and captures its weapons in the process of the struggle by a bold offensive of the unarmed masses against police and military detachments (in the case of Krakow); in a bold and sudden attack of poorly armed self-defense detachments, carrying on guerilla tactics upon well-armed but scattered forces of the bourgeoisie (Hamburg); in a bold and sudden attack of working class detachments on military barracks (Reval); by means of seizing munition factories and arsenals (Austria), etc. It is the duty of the Party of the proletariat to organize and lead this struggle for the arming of the workers. And here it is necessary to particularly emphasize the fact that in order to capture firearms the proletariat must carry on the most active, the most energetic struggles to win over the soldiers to its side. In "The Lessons of the Moscow Uprising" Lenin speaks about the "most energetic struggle to win over the wavering troops", of the physical struggle for the army", of the "necessity of wiping out the officers", "the impermissibility of waiting for the moment when the troops will come over to our side". "We would be poor speciments of pedants if we forget that during the uprising a physical struggle for the troops is also necessary", wrote Lenin.

In Krakow a serious struggle was possible because the revolutionary sentiments which seized hold of the masses made their way into the army as a result of the correct offensive tactics of the insurgents. A certain section of the army was wavering: even General Czikel explains the behavior of the infantry on November 6 as follows: "The reason why the infantry let us down is not that the soldiers were afraid, but that the soldier who goes to war gladly and with a song on his lips, becomes very restrained when he is called upon to fight his brothers." (From Czikel's testimony at the Krakow Trial). But if the Krakow workers had not by a bold attack carried on an energetic struggle to win over the wavering troops, if they had not disarmed the 16th Infantry Regiment, then these troops would not have joined the workers spontaneously on November 6. More than this, in the given situation (insufficient disintegration of the army, absence of conscientious and consistent revolutionary activities among the troops, collaboration of the Pilsudski-ites with the Chieno-Piast government) the bourgeoisie would have been able to evacuate the troops and isolate them, which would have been a fatal move and would have signified the failure of the workers who had just begun the

uprising. Only the bold offensive and breaking through of the police cordon, only the physical struggle for winning over the wavering elements among the troops, put the firearms into the hands of the workers and permitted them to engage in a struggle against the loyal cavalry and armored cars. If the workers of Krakow had been as bold in undertaking an attack against the barracks of the 20th Infantry Regiment and had wiped out the officers, then they would have succeeded in winning over a section of this regiment for acive struggle on their side. This would give them a possibility of conducting a physical fight for the remaining soldiers and together with the revolutionary troops, to completely break the resistance of the retreating enemy. Another mistake of the participants of the Krakow uprising was their failure to arm all the active workers who were prepared to take part in the struggle, and did not attack the arsenal and munition stores.

However, notwithstanding these mistakes the path which the Krakow workers followed at the beginning of the uprising, an offensive against the enemy, is the correct path leading to the arming of the workers and a successful struggle for the army.

3. Marx, Engels and Lenin pointed out more than once that the armed uprising is an art, the same as the art of conducting any other war. The basic rules of this art of uprising were formulated by Lenin thus:

> 1. "Never play with the uprising, once you begin you must be determined to go to the end."
> 2. "It is necessary to have a considerable balance of forces in the decisive place at the decisive time, otherwise the enemy who is better prepared and organized, will crush the rebels."
> 3. "Once the uprising has begun it is necessary to act with the greatest decisiveness and unconditionally take the offensive. Defense is the death of an armed uprising."
> 4. "Try to capture the enemy unawares and during the time when its forces are scattered."
> 5. "It is necessary to achieve at least some success every day. (Even every hour if we speak about one city.) And at all costs keep up the morale of the rebels."

In the Krakow uprising we find many examples of the application of this correct tactic of street struggle. But they were more the result of class instinct than of a conscious understanding of the art of armed uprising by the masses.

When the workers of Krakow entered the struggle they were not fully conscious of the necessity to fight to the end. When the masses went out on the streets they did not clearly understand that they were to participate in armed struggle, capturing their weapons from the enemy by a bold attack and that with these weapons they would achieve victory in an offensive against the loyal troops of the police and army. This can be explained by the absence of a Bolshevik Party as the leader of the uprising. This explains the mistakes of the workers, their inability to work out the next basic tasks of the uprising, their wavering, their inability to concentrate all their forces and utilize their advantages in moral force for a concentrated attack against the enemy at the decisive moment, at a moment when panic and disorder held sway in the enemy's staff, when the remnants of the cavalry troops and the police were on the defensive in the market place, and the majority of infantry detachments were scattered in the barracks, and were wavering. On the morning of November 6, *the enemy was taken unawares by the very boldness of the mass attack on their armed forces.*

The workers of Krakow after beginning their struggle took up the offensive and acted in a way which may serve as an example of decisiveness. But this continued only up to the time when the workers saw the enemy's troops before them. The workers did not know that the disorganized and retreating troops of the enemy must be continuously pursued and mercilessly crushed. Instead of doing this, the workers began to prepare for defense under the influence of the treacherous tactics of the P.P.S. The initial great successes which gave them tremendous moral advantage, as a result of the application of the only correct tactics of an armed uprising, namely *the tactics of attack and the combination of siege with sudden attack,* were frittered away. Conducting only defense spells the death of an armed uprising. A new proof of the correctness of this ingenious formula of Marx and Lenin is supplied by the events in Austria.

To these mistakes and defeats of the Krakow uprising, which could have been avoided if the workers had fought under the leadership of a Bolshevik Communist Party, if the uprising had been directed by a military-political center, it is necessary to add the following:

(a) The workers did not build even one barricade nor dig one trench across the streets. This gave the armored cars the possibility of freely patrolling the streets and discharging wild volleys of heavy machine gun fire. This also made it more difficult for the insurgents to advance along the streets and to attack the market place. Actually owing to this, the cavalry was able to defend itself for some time.

This feature makes the Krakow uprising very different from the uprising in Hamburg where the insurgents erected barricades on a large scale and kept the armored cars out of the districts they occupied and even succeeded *in cornering the armored cars in individual streets.*

(b) The telephone wires between Czikel's head-

quarters and Warsaw, Dombij, the barracks, the governor's headquarters, police headquarters, etc., were not destroyed. The workers did not even drive out the strike-breakers (members of the fascist "SSS" organization—Society for Social Service) who manned the central telephone station, post office, etc.

(c) Agitators and working class delegations were not delegated to the barracks. The soldiers of the 16th Regiment who were taken prisoners by the workers were not utilized in winning over the soldiers from the barracks.

(d) Delegates were not sent to the working class districts of Krakow, nor to the other cities, primarily to the centres of the railway strike. The masses did not understand the vital necessity of uniting military actions with political activities aimed at winning over the army. A characteristic feature of the Krakow revolt is that from first to last it was limited to the center of the city. The mistake of the insurgents consisted in not sending their delegates to the working class districts of Krakow, and above all to the Krakow coal basin, in order to raise the workers to struggle.

(e) Not one detachment of the workers was dispatched for action behind the lines of the enemy, though such action would have resulted in creating further panic in the enemy's camp.

The Krakow uprising opened a new page of glory in the history of the class struggle of the proletariat and its ally, the poor peasantry, who, clad in soldiers' uniforms fraternized with their brothers of the factories and mills. The great historic and present-day importance of the Krakow uprising at a time when similar events are taking place in Austria, consists in the fact that the workers, the majorty of whom had only yesterday followed the P.P.S., took up arms. These workers were educated during the course of scores of years in the spirit of opportunism, in the spirit of subordination to bourgeois legality. Krakow and Vienna show that the proletariat, whose ranks have been split by the Second International, is able to come out face to face with its class enemy in a united front and show miracles of heroism in the course of the struggle providing the socialist workers tear themselves away from the influence of their treacherous leaders. After the victory of the proletariat of Russia, Krakow and Vienna show that the opportunism of the social-democratic workers is not some "inherited" quality of one section of the working class, but that it has been injected artificially by the opportunist leaders who support the powerful and complicated bourgeois apparatus of power with all their might. It is our duty to do everything possible that the self-sacrificing struggle and the blood of the Krakow workers should not have been in vain. *The lessons of the Krakow uprising must be made known to every class conscious worker. The truth about Krakow* must penetrate into the minds of all P.P.S. workers. It is with unexampled hypocricy that the P.P.S. organizes annual ceremonial marches to the graves of the workers who fell in the battle of November 6, and comes out in the role of the allies of these workers and falsifies the character of the uprising. It is of special importance today, to expose, on the basis of positive proof, the shameful treacherous role of the P.P.S. during the Krakow uprising especially now when the P.P.S. and the other parties of the Second International are making desperate attempts to take the credit for the heroic struggle of the Austrian proletariat.

Ten years have elapsed since the Krakow uprising. The Communist Party of Poland having committed several serious mistakes in the course of this period (the May coup d'etat) has learned a great deal and has grown into a powerful force. The Party has decisively taken the path which leads to its becoming transformed, in the full sense of the word, into a Party of the new type, into a Bolshevik Party independently leading the struggle of the broad masses of the proletariat and toiling peasantry. Our Party has become strengthened, has grown and has become a monolithic detachment of revolutionaries, not only in the struggle against the class enemies—fascism and social-fascism—but in a relentless struggle against all deviations from the line of the Party and the Comintern, primarily in the struggle against the Right deviation. In its day to day practical activities, the Party is directed by the words of Comrade Stalin stated at the Polish Commission of the Fifth C.I. Congress:

> "It is not sufficient merely to accept the Communist program and issue Communist slogans. The essence of the matter is to reconstruct the everyday practical work of the Party in such a way that every step of the Party and every one of its campaigns should naturally lead to the revolutionary education of the masses, to the preparation for revolution."

The Communist Party of Poland has not only grown ideologically. Numerically it now presents a force five times bigger than it was in 1923. However, of first importance is the correct Bolshevik line of the present Central Committee of our Party, a line directed towards the proletarian revolution, a line consistently being carried out in practice by the Bolshevik Central Committee of the C.P. of Poland. And it is precisely this which will be of decisive importance for the results of the struggle between the proletariat and fascism which is in power in Poland, a result in favor of the victorious proletarian revolution.

THE ECONOMIC SITUATION IN IRELAND AND THE TASKS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF IRELAND

By R. McILHONE

THE world economic crisis has dealt very heavy blows at the economy of the Irish Free State, as well as in the Northern counties. The agrarian crisis, the fall in the prices of agricultural goods, now embraces to the fullest extent the main sector of Irish economy, viz., cattle raising, and the results of the decline in the export trade, particularly of cattle, and cattle by-products, is causing intense discontent among the rural population.

In the industrial North, the world economic crisis quickly made itself felt, closing down the shipyards, and driving down the living standards of the workers to such a degree that the masses waged a magnificent fight against the armed forces of the state in Belfast, October, 1932, demanding increased relief. There is an intense sharpening of the relations between the masses of Ireland and the imperialist government in Great Britain, due to the ruthless prosecution of the economic war by Britain and demands of the workers and farmers for freedom from British imperialism, and the rapidly growing discontent with De Valera government.

De Valera came to power on the crest of the broad national struggle of the workers and farmers demanding an end to imperialist domination of Ireland. This National reformist government unfolded a demagogic "program for the industrialization of Ireland," to make Ireland into a self-supporting country, independent of British imperialism. As is well known, the De Valera government, under the pressure of the masses, carried through certain measures which affected the interests of Great Britain (cancellation of Land Annuities' payment, etc.) but at the same time leaving untouched the basic positions of British Imperialism. The British Government feels few ill-effects from these economic measures adopted by De Valera. For instance, Mr. Cosgrave, drew attention in this speech at the Mansion House Blue Shirt Convention on Feb. 8, to the fact that the withheld annuities to April 1, 1934, would amount to 7,063,000 pounds. The British Government replied to the act of De Valera in refusing to send the Land Annuities to Britain by the institution of an economic war, placing prohibitive tariffs on Irish imports, and to throttle the Irish Trade. Up to Jan. 13, 1934, the British Government had collected from special duties on Irish imports the sum of 6,243,000 pounds. They had still 820,000 pounds to collect before April 1, 1934. Now that the British Government had recovered the Annuities they have decided to cut down cattle imports by 50 per cent.

The Irish Communists declared that there could be no solution of the problem of creating a self-sufficing and industrialized Ireland before the rule of British imperialism and Irish capitalism was overthrown and the entire country united under the Workers' and Farmers' Socialist Republic. De Valera spread national illusion among the masses that it is possible to create this situation without a decisive struggle with British imperialism. Instead of the latter, the De Valera government has consistently directed its main forces against the growing revolutionary National movement, to disorganize the struggle of the masses for independence and set themselves openly against the workers' struggle, and assisted in enforcing wage reductions and worsening working conditions.

What results are shown from De Valera's National Reformist Policy?

1) The total trade of the Irish Free State has fallen from £105,331,686 in 1929-30 to £55,405,208 in 1933.

2) In the period of 1932 to 1933 the following picture:

	Exports	Imports	Total Trade
1931	£37,070,896	£50,460,880	£87,531,776
1932	29,349,016	45,115,151	74,464,767
1933	20,068,594	35,336,594	55,405,208

3) Live cattle exports fell from £7,152,969 in 1932 to £4,758,846. The export of all live animals fell from £10,047,209 to £5,953,909 in the same period. Imports of fat cattle to England have been prohibited.

4) Agricultural prices have collapsed as follows:

July	1914	100
	1930	124.8
	1931	110.1
	1932	98.2
	1933	80.5

Farmers who received 4s. 4d. per gallon for milk sold to creamers in 1932, in 1933 received 3s. 9d.

De Valera, in order to protect as far as possible the interests of the cattle ranchers, big farmers and exporting trusts, organized a system of bounties to enable the exporters in Britain, which is in fact the main market for Irish goods, to circumvent the tariff prohibitions. The system of bounties to the big

farmers and exporting interests must sooner or later lead to financial complications and the budget position is weakening, particularly as the proposed £6,000,000 loan issued recently had to be closed without being fully realized.

At the same time the position of the Irish masses is being made intolerable. They have to shoulder the double burden of the crisis and the intense economic war conducted by British imperialism.

Already in the larger industries, railways, road and water transport, and clothing, serious strikes have taken place against wage reductions. The cost of living has risen. Butter which is sold retail in Febuary, 1934, in England and Scotland at 10d. per lb. is displayed in Dublin shops at 1s. 4½d. From August to November, 1933, the index figure rose from 149 per cent. to 156 per cent.

Here is a picture of the position of the wages offered to agricultural laborers in the country, when they attended the hirings.

AGRICULTURAL WAGES

Male Laborers over 21

	Leinster	Munster	Connaught	Ulster	Free State
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
1932	23.6	24.3	22.0	22.0	23.6
1933	22.3	22.6	20.9	20.0	22.0

Male laborers over 21 (receiving board and lodging).

(Per half year)

	£ s.	£ s.	£ s.	£ s.	£ s.
1932	13.15	14.3	13.0	12.11	13.15
1933	12.18	12.16	12.2	11.1	12.13

Female Farm Servants

	£ s.	£ s.	£ s.	£ s.	£ s.
1932	8.4	10.5	8.16	9.2	9.11
1933	8.4	9.8	8.12	8.10	8.19

The *Irish Press*, commenting on the hirings in Ulster on Nov. 21, 1933, stated:

"Not more than half the farm hands on the look out for work were able to obtain employment and their position was somewhat distressing at the opening of the winter season."

Receipts for railway goods and passenger traffic have also fallen by 6 per cent on the South and 55 per cent in the Great Northern line, the twelve weeks strike on the Northern railways had some, but clearly not all, influence on these figures.

The De Valera program for the building of Irish industries to supply the home market has had very meagre results and is confined to clothing, where some new small factories have been set going with sweated girl labor; to building as a result of heavy Government grants to local authorities; and to a small degree the Inchichore rail shops as a result of the tariff on metals.

The unemployed figures have gone up from 82,000 in December, 1933, to 96,000 on Feb. 5, 1934. The registered figures, however, do not reveal the privations of the Irish unemployed. Actually no more than 1/4 of the registered are receiving allowances. The relief scales in Dublin are atrociously low. There are 120,000 people on Home Assistance, and scales range from 5s. weekly to a maximum of 29s. 2d. for which latter relief work must be performed. There are varying scales of relief, but a typical case is that of a leader of the unemployed in Dublin who receives for himself and three children (he is a widower) the total sum of 15s, from which he pays 4s. 6d rent. The Government has now brought forward a new Unemployment Bill, which while giving a small cash payment (9s. per week in County borough and 7s. in towns with population less than 7,000) to single men, will cut the sum paid to families in Dublin and other counties considerably. The maximum in Dublin will be 20s. for man, wife and five or more children.

The last year has witnessed a considerable rise in the movement of the workers and farmers against British imperialism and against their own capitalists. Strikes have broken out in railways, docks, tramways, clothing and building, and the march of the unemployed to the North received wide support from the workers.

The rising discontent of the laboring masses in Ireland with British imperialism, the growing class struggles of the workers, and also that the British Government is anxious to have a "firm" government in Ireland to ensure its war plans, are considerations that are tending to sharpen the entire struggle.

GROWTH OF THE FASCIST FORCES AND THE STRUGGLE AGAINST THEM

The uniting of the Cosgrave "United Ireland Party" with the former "Army Comrades Association" which led the anti-Communist campaign in the summer of 1933, was called forth by the growth in the mass discontent and indignation with the rule of British imperialism. The Blue Shirts, organized by the ex-police chief O'Duffy, are not popular with the Irish masses, and spontaneous outbreaks against the Blue Shirts have taken place in Dublin, Kerry, Dundalk. In Drogheda the soldiers were ordered to turn bayonets on the workers who were fighting the fascists. But just as De Valera holds back the masses from decisive struggle against British imperialism, just as they protect the Irish capitalists from the economic war at the expense of the masses, so also do the leadership of the National Republican Movement, the Army Council of the Irish Republican Army attempt to stultify

and confuse the masses, to prevent them from mobilizing against O'Duffy.

What is the essence of the fascist movement in Ireland, and on which basis is it taking root? The fascist movement in Ireland seeks to perpetuate the rule of British imperialism in Ireland by rule of open terrorist methods. They represent first and foremost those sections of Ireland whose economic and political interests are bound up with the maintenance of the closest possible connections with the British imperialists, viz., banking, cattle raising, food producing and exporting interests.

The Irish Banks are connected directly and intimately with the English banking system. Of the total production of the Irish Free State, 40 per cent is for export and practically 90 per cent of this is for the British market.

The *Economist* of Feb. 17, 1934, in a description of the Irish banking system, refers to the Irish Free State as having "developed naturally as the agricultural adjunct of a great industrial population" and goes on to say:

"It would be difficult to find another country with a large portion of its economic life bound up with international trade; and well nigh impossible to find one so closely dependent upon trade with one single neighbor. The Irish Banking system is entirely conditioned by these fundamental facts. The Irish banking system developed as part of the British financial system, serving an outlying part of the country and moving entirely in the orbit of the London Money Market."

The banks' investments are mainly British securities, some £88 millions out of £93 millions are invested outside the Free State. The *Economist* further states that "virtually the whole external business of the country passes through the banks who are the only dealers in foreign exchange."

The Dublin Corporation recently floated a loan of £1,000,000. The Free State Government also issued a loan of £6,000,000. It is quite evident that the bankers boycotted these loans as they were withdrawn incomplete. The *Economist* of Feb. 17, sums the matter up thus:

> "Neither of these issues was a great success owing partly to the rather high price asked but mainly owing to the prevailing political uncertainty."

The entire interests of the Irish banks are thus seen to be closely bound up with the interests of British Rule in Ireland. With the bulk of their assets in England, with their total cash reserves in London, Bank of England, it is clear that the financiers of the nine Irish banks are content that Ireland should remain an "agricultural adjunct" of Britain. They are very much opposed to the continuance of the economic war and clearly prepared to give their support to such a government as O'Duffy would lead.

Despite the fact that the De Valera government has tried to protect the exporting interests from the blasts of the economic war, at the expense of the laboring masses, the bigger farmers and cattle-ranchers are discontented. Recently in Cork they started on a campaign to establish Councils of Action throughout the country. From the beginning of the De Valera government, they have consistently, in the County Councils, carried on a sabotage of Rate Collections to disorganize the work of the local authorities.

Quite recently in Clonmel, Tipperary, an enquiry was held into the non-payment of rates by these big farmers when the following facts were disclosed. The South Tipperary County Council was under examination and the secretary of the South Tipperary Board of Health, Mr. E. Beary, stated that no money was available to pay relief. It was disclosed by the Taxation officer that the total receipts in motor taxation for the County in 1933 were the highest since 1927. He showed that Members of the County Council paid sums of £20, £13, etc., in motor taxation. The Chairman of the County Council, Mr. Ryan, who complained that he had lost double the amount of his rates through cattle losses, paid £300 a year in wages.

The inspector asked him:

Inspector: "You are not contending that you cannot pay your rates?"

Mr. Ryan: "No" (*Irish Press,* Feb. 9, 1934).

General O'Duffy pronounced the policy of the Blue Shirts in his speech at the initial convention in Dublin in early February. What is his position?

The economic war with England he dismissed as a "mere financial issue." His program he stated as follows:

"The goods which we have to sell in large quantities consist of agricultural produce, and there is only one profitable export market in which to dispose of these goods—the British market . . .

"Today as a result of the economic conflict with England, the agricultural community in this country has had torn from it the wonderful future which lay clearly in our view, and not alone has this suicidal result been the outcome of this conflict, but the individual and collective capital of the farmer has vanished, the purchasing power has become nil, and the hope of any income from his pursuits is for the future utterly negligible.

"The only real alternatives before the Irish people are the reunion of Ireland on our present statute" [that is, in the British Empire—R. McI.] "and a declaration of a Republic for the Twenty-Six Counties" [The Free State]. "The people are free to

choose either. United Ireland calls on all the people to achieve unity of political purpose among themselves on the only sound policy as an essential preliminary to the reunion of all Ireland."

The General then lauded "the corporative State," especially for the use to which it can be put to supress "class conflicts," and "Communism." But he is finding grave difficulty in convincing the Irish masses that a United Ireland within the British Empire, in the interests of the money-lenders and cattle ranchers, is the goal of the Seven-century struggles of the Irish Nation.

The defeat of the fascist movement in Ireland; its efforts to come to power to crush the masses' resistance, to keep the oppressed Irish people in subjection by terror, will depend in the first place on the ability of the Irish Communists to paralyze the influence of the National and Social Reformists in Ireland over the working class and poor and middle peasantry, and to build the common working class front in the struggle against British imperialism and Irish capitalism. In this lies the main task of the Irish Communists at the present stage.

But there is no other leadership than the C. P. I. which can take up the fight against the growing fascist menace. The Irish Labor Party passed a resolution on this question at the Annual Conference but does nothing to carry it out. In the National Movement the Army Council, in face of the many heroic fights and revolutionary traditions of the Irish Republican Army, has called the Volunteers to take no part in fights with the fascists. The Army Council made a statement to the *Irish Press* (De Valera's paper) in an endeavor to prevent the rank and file of the Army from participation in the mass outbreaks against the Blue Shirts, and was able to organize individual raids on the distributors of Bass' beer, but when the workers came out on the streets against the fascists, the Army Council denounced "individual terrorism." "The Council takes this opportunity of re-declaring that acts of individual and local terrorism, even against the recognized fascist-imperialist organizations, are not the policy of the Army." (*An Phoblacht,* Feb. 10, 1934). At this stage for the Army Council to "denounce individual action" means only a denunciation *of the mass action* of the workers and farmers against the Blue Shirts. Instead of mobilizing the I. R. A. for the struggle against the establishment of a fascist government in Ireland, the Army Council concentrates its fire against the Communists in the I.R.A. Many Communists have been expelled; even two non-Communist volunteers who attended an anti-fascist meeting were expelled because Murray, the C. P. leader, was the main speaker. The Army Council has issued its program entitled "Governmental policy and Constitution" which is tolerably stuffed with all kinds of social demagogy. In this "new" "social order" which this fundamentally national-reformist platform envisages they will "permit" private enterprise. It remains a secret how "Industry shall be the property of the Community" under such conditions. All born in Ireland "shall be citizens" including the capitalists. But under its vacillating leadership the Irish Republican Army is disintegrating. It is necessary that at the forthcoming Army Convention the mass sentiments of the rank and file for Action against British imperialism and its agents—the O'Duffy-Cosgrave fascists, be expressed in the Convention, and that the entire forces of the revolutionary-Republican workers and peasants be thrown into the common united front against the yoke of imperialism.

The tasks of the Irish Communists in this period are extremely responsible and heavy tasks. The Irish Communist Party whose first Congress was held only in June, 1933, is a very young and weak Party. From its very birth it has had to fight against all the forces that could be stirred up against them by the government and the priests—mob attacks of the lumpen proletariat, meetings smashed, premises burned in Dublin and Leitrum, victimized and beaten up by priest-agents in the country villages.

In the central towns of the Free State, the Party has established itself and groups and contacts exist in twenty other counties and towns. The Party has taken the initiative in Dublin to organize the anti-fascist movement, and is campaigning through the League Against Fascism for a Dublin Anti-Fascist Congress and for a mass recruitment to the League Against Fascism. At the same time the Party is carrying on the fight to expose the role of the De Valera government and the Army Council, and to bring forward its own policy of struggle for national freedom and the Workers' and Farmers' Socialist government.

The first result of the agitation of the Party in the Trades Union branches is the decision taken by the Dublin Trades Council on March 8th to organize a one-day General Strike on May 1, and a demonstration on March 18, against the fascist menace. This is a good indication of the growing hostility to the fascist movement in Ireland.

But the young Irish Party has still many serious weaknesses which if not overcome quickly will widen its isolation from the workers and farmers. What are these weaknesses?

The main task was set by the First Congress of the C. P. of Ireland in June, 1933, to establish the Communist Party as the class leadership of the workers, at the head of the only class which can lead the struggle for the liberation of Ireland

from British imperialism and destroy the role of the Irish capitalists.

The first Congress laid down the strategic line for the development of the proletarian revolution in Ireland:

> "The Irish working class will carry on the national independence struggle to the end, attaching to itself the masses of the peasant farmers, so as to crush the power of resistance of the British imperialists and paralyze the unreliability of the Irish capitalist class.
>
> "The Irish proletariat will bring about a socialist revolution, attaching to itself the masses of semi-proletarian elements in the population, so as to break the power of resistance of the capitalists, and paralyze the unreliability of the peasants and the petty bourgeoisie." (Congress Manifesto.)

The Congress, reviewing historically the treacherous role which the Irish national and petty bourgeoisie played in the national struggles, (Sinn Fein, Army Council, etc.) came to the only possible conclusion that the revolution cannot be victorious in Ireland unless at the head of the working class was a class proletarian Party, associated with the world Communist International — the Communist Party of Ireland.

Having come to a correct standpoint, the young Irish Communists find great difficulty in carrying these correct Leninist principles into life. How the Party must be built, and how the work of a Communist Party can be carried on under all conditions, how to put into practice the Congress Manifesto—these are the main questions now before the Irish Party.

The changes in the situation in Ireland since the first Congress in June, 1933, serve to emphasize the urgent need that the Party carry on an energetic struggle for the leadership of the mass movements. With the growth of the O'Duffy-Cosgrave movement, the British Government, pursuing the most merciless economic war, places great hope on the success of the fascist movement, as the means within the country, of crushing under a regime of terror, the aspirations of the Irish masses. The De Valera government pretending to adopt "measures" against the fascists, denying them the right to wear blue shirts, in practice defends them against the masses, and uses the Cosgrave Coercion Act to suppress the Republican and working class movement. Whereas in June, the leadership of the Irish Republican Army, "permitted" Communists within its ranks (at the 1933 Army Convention a resolution to expel the Communists was defeated), they have since organized an intensive campaign against the Communists in the Army. The mass movement against fascism is developing spontaneously and only the bold independent leadership of the Party will be able to connect these spontaneous outbreaks into a powerful, organized struggle.

What is it that prevents our young Irish Party from taking advantage of these extremely favorable conditions for advancing to the head of the masses? In the first place, the new members of the Party in the Free State are drawn in the main from Republican sources. Many of these comrades have brilliant records of struggle in the national movement, participating in the Easter uprising, and the fight against the Black and Tans—the British thugs sent into Ireland to crush the masses with armed forces. Although they are experienced in armed struggle, guerilla warfare, etc., the very experience in the military Republican forces has kept many of these comrades from active participation in economic and political struggles of the masses. The policy of the Army Council has been—especially in the De Valera period—to keep the Army members away from the daily struggles of the workers and during strikes or unemployed demonstrations, to conveniently organize a drilling parade in the mountains. The activity of the opposition organized by the Party in the Army has been directed to winning the Army members to assist the workers in their economic struggles. This was due to the growing influence of the Communists in the Army.

The sectarian tendencies which have been inherited by the Party from the petty-bourgeois organizations to which many members belonged before the Party was organized, were expressed in the acceptance by the Party as a whole in the Free State, of the state of illegality, when the priests mobilized their worshippers in April and May 1933 against the Party. The Party, then known as Revolutionary Workers Groups, did not fight for legality, did not even understand the necessity for such a struggle. The Party Congress itself was organized "illegally" with no preparation among the masses. At the same time even today the Party comrades in the southern towns outside Dublin, although loyal in every way to the Party, are completely underground, carrying on no independent Communist work. The leadership of the Party in the past even opposed the local comrades entering a reformist union when their own independent trade union had been smashed by the priests. Certain good mass work is done by the comrades in the country in the I. R. A., in the pits, in the unemployed movement, but this is absolutely insufficient for the Communist Party of Ireland.

One of the most acute problems therefore before the Party leadership is how these "under-

ground" groups can carry on independent mass Communist work, to show the comrades how to utilize every legal possibility to advance the Communist Party of Ireland before the masses, how they can make real contacts with the workers and farmers, how they can, not only in words but in deeds, secure that work is undertaken in the reformist unions and really take over the leadership of the mass struggles which are developing around them and in which they themselves are participating. Similarly in all other parts of the country on the basis of the particular conditions to combine every legal possibility for work with the conditions of semi and total illegality. The Party as a whole is not illegal, has not been outlawed, although the priests and authorities have organized a "terror" against the Communists in many southern villages.

The struggle for Communism in Ireland must not be weakened one single instant. To do so would be to capitulate before the national reformist leadership of the Republican Movement and to strengthen fascism.

But in a number of places a very weak fight is being made for the building of the Party among the masses, for independent Communist activity. There is a strong tendency to weaken the fight for setting up a mass political party in Ireland, especially in the South, where even numerically strong local organizations do Communist work among the masses (Cork).

The Party as a whole will not progress however until a determined effort is made to mobilize every member for mass work in the factories and Reformist Trades Unions. The big economic struggle of 1933, in the railways especially, and the more recent strikes of the port workers and Dublin Tramwaymen, show that although the Party carried out good mass activity during the course of these strikes, building in the case of the Belfast railwaymen a strong Vigilance Group, the results of these strikes showed that the Party is isolated as a consequence of its failure to carry out systematic work in the trades unions and among these workers. It is particularly necessary because the reformists in the Irish Trades Unions are utilizing the wide disgust with the conduct of the British T. U. officials in these strikes for a demagogic campaign for "Irish Trade Unions." The Railway strikes of 1933 resulted in a mass desertion of the British Trades Unions, because of the betrayal of these officials. The Party was unable to utilize the opportunity for organizing the workers into a new independent class Irish Union on the basis of the Vigilance Movement, the rank and file opposition in the Railway Union. The port workers' strike resulted in the organization of a New Dockers Union with 2,000 members. The Party defends the efforts of the Irish workers to organize their own independent mass unions, but warns them against the creation of small sectarian Trades Unions which is being stimulated by the tactics being pursued by the social-fascists of expelling revolutionaries from the unions. It carries on the struggle for the election of their own rank and file revolutionary workers to the leadership of the lower T. U. organizations, the creation of a revolutionary trade union opposition in the Unions, as an organizational base for the development of a united front struggle against the capitalists, isolating the social-democratic and national reformist leaders from the masses. But the Party must do the first thing, that is to mobilize every member for work in the factories and Trades Unions. This applies especially to the South where it is possible to utilize the legal reformist trades union branches for our work. It must be done in the industrial North, in Belfast, where the opportunities for a wide extension of this work are greater than anywhere else in Ireland. This is the only way it will be possible for the Party to become the leader of the economic and political struggles of the workers.

Together with this the Party leadership must work out forms of organization and methods of work among the rural laborers and small farmers. Already certain achievements have been made by the Party groups in the countryside in leading the fight of the small farmers and laborers against the big farmers (driving their cattle from the land, destroying their fences, etc.). These Party groups must be shown how to lead these small actions into bigger mass actions for the economic needs of the laborers and small farmers (for higher fees, for relief payments, against taxation, for the break up of the big ranches) and to connect these with the strikes and demonstrations in the towns, and the fight against the O'Duffy Fascists, the open agents of British imperialism.

The situation of the unemployed from North to South is an appalling one. The National Unemployed Movement in Belfast which led the October 1932 relief actions has carried on fairly consistent work among the unemployed. In Dublin the Unemployed Movement is very weak, although a very good campaign was organized to send a group of unemployed on a March to Belfast in October 1933 on the anniversary of the Belfast struggles. This March received wide support on the road, but the Northern police turned them home practically at the point of the gun at the Northern border.

The Congress Manifesto lays down clearly the general principles for the revolution in Ireland, in

the first place, the revolutionary mass struggle for National Independence by the overthrow of the rule of British imperialism; the revolutionary struggle of the workers and poor farmers against Irish bourgeoisie, to destroy capitalist exploitation and the creation of the necessary conditions for building of Socialism in Ireland. It is now necessary that the Party should work over a program of the daily needs of the workers, which could form a basis for further development of the struggle of the workers and poor farmers and which would explain clearly and simply one revolutionary way out of the crisis. We must bring forward demands and slogans for the workers, for the unemployed, for the agricultural laborers and poor farmers, showing how these demands can be realized, which will mobilize the working masses of Ireland into the mass united front against British Imperialism and Irish capitalism.

The Party suffers acutely from lack of cadres, of leading local, district and national comrades who have some knowledge of Leninist strategy and tactics, and who are able to give political direction to the Party work, to consolidate its organized connections with the workers and farmers. It is necessary therefore that in the Party itself there is great need for educational work among the general membership. Apart from one workers' study circle in Dublin, there is not a single other Party or Workers' educational circle in the entire Free State. At the same time there is a great demand for simple literature which would explain elementary Communist principles.

In the industrial North, especially in Belfast, where the Party has a good standing among the workers, as a result of its leadership during the Relief workers' fight in 1934, there is also a strong tendency for the Party members to be submerged in the mass organizations, to hide the face of the Party. This was expressed in the recent elections where the Party not only did not put up candidates, but there were expressions of opposition to revolutionary parliamentary policy by leading local comrades.

The whole Party must see that this is a decisive question now for Ireland, that the Party should turn to the masses and carry on the struggle for the leadership of the mass movement. The decision of the Dublin Trades Council must be taken to all the Trade Unions, must be repeated in every town and village throughout the country. The Party must begin to popularize the decisions, to draw the masses into the United Front, under the leadership of the Communist Party, to make it impossible for the bureaucracy to "shelve" these decisions.

The Party must in this way make a determined appeal to the revolutionary rank and file Republicans in the Republican Army to join forces with the League against Fascism in the United Front. The glorious fighting traditions of the Irish Republican Army must be utilized to destroy fascism and to mobilize the masses for the overthrow of British domination and the power of the Irish capitalists.

The Party must boldly take the initiative throughout the whole country in developing the mass fight against fascism and British imperialism, against De Valera and Irish capitalism raising fearlessly the main slogan of the Communist International, informing the workers of the only way out—the path of struggle for a workers' and farmers' republic, for Soviet Power, and for the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.

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